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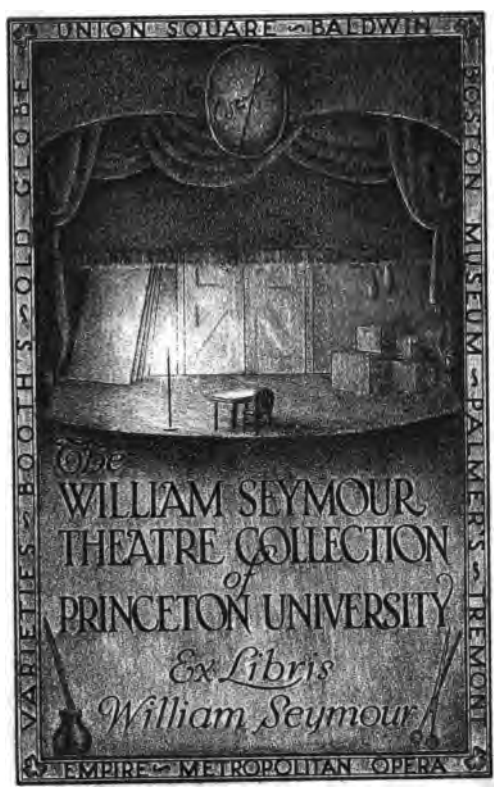
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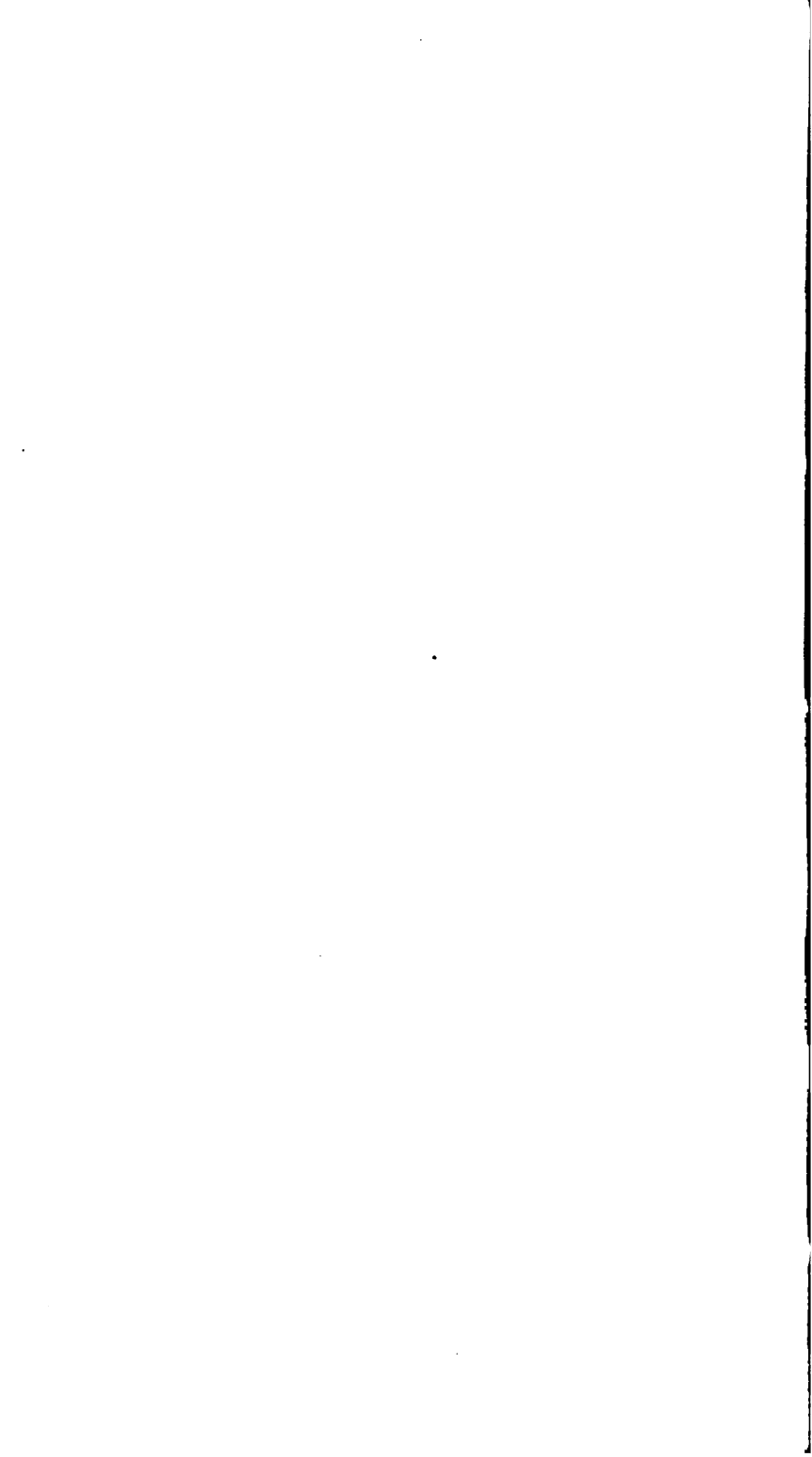












*Whitehead*

# THE STAGE:

BOTH BEFORE

AND

BEHIND THE CURTAIN,

FROM

"OBSERVATIONS TAKEN ON THE SPOT."

BY ALFRED BUNN,

LATE LESSEE OF THE THEATRES ROYAL DRURY LANE AND  
COVENT GARDEN.

"I am (not) forbid  
To tell the secrets of my prison-house."

HAMLET, ACT I. SC. V.

---

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL II.

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PHILADELPHIA:

LEA & BLANCHARD.

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1840.

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**GRIGGS & CO. PRINTERS.**

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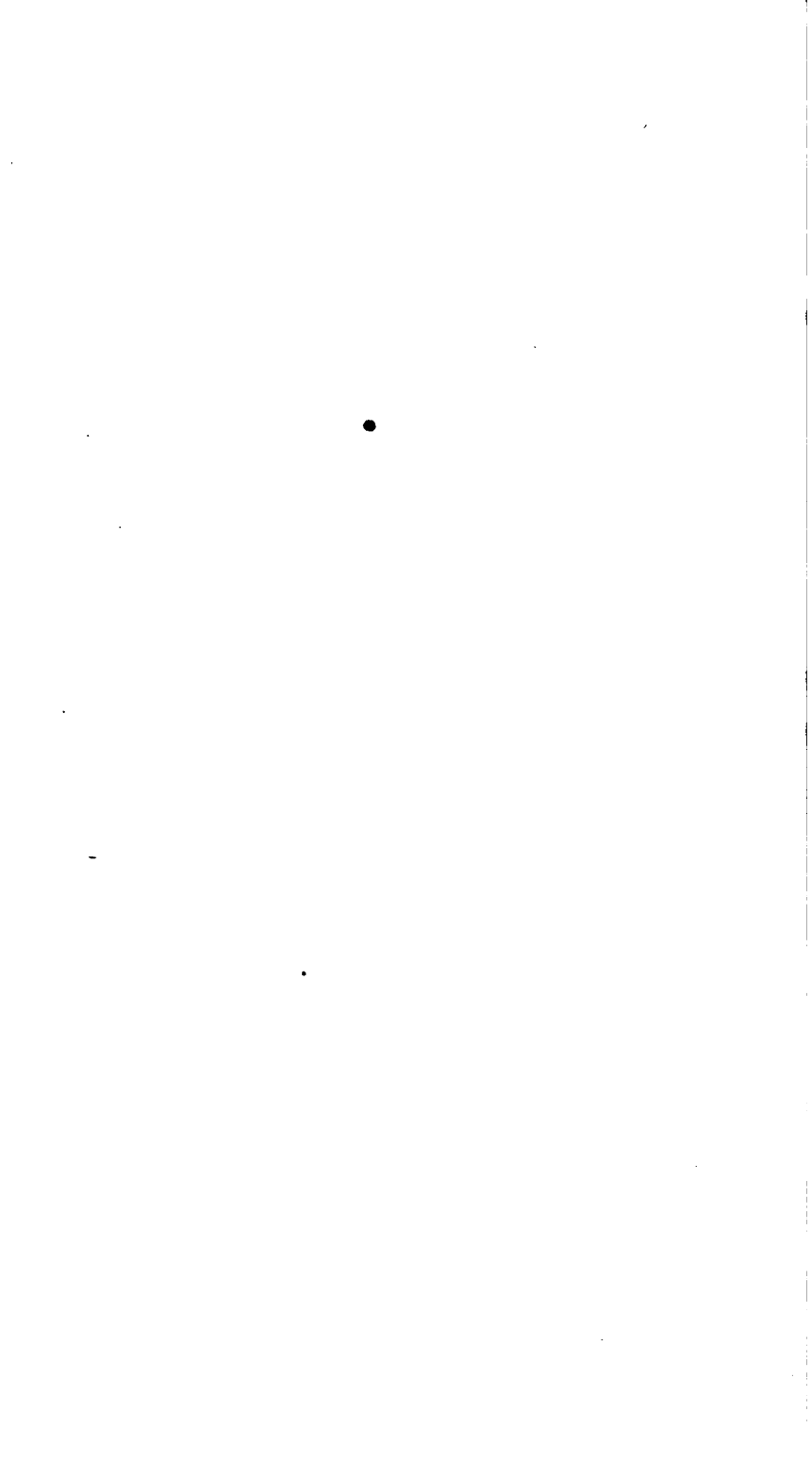
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# THE STAGE:

BOTH

BEFORE AND BEHIND THE CURTAIN.

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## CHAPTER I.

The examiner of plays unfit for his situation—Lord Chamberlain of a different opinion—Mr. Kemble and Mr. Bunn at issue upon the point—Mr. Knowles and Mademoiselle Duvernay—The Siege of Corinth—The Opera Buffa—Grimaldi's finale, and the manager's fall—Different conduct of Irish and English boys—Sir E. Bulwer a good hand at a bargain—His correspondence with the lessee—Elliston, Winston, and George Colman—A licenser a licentiate—Extract from the new scale of fees, and what they extract from the pocket.

AN event, without precedent, followed the death of Mr. Colman, in the appointment of his successor: that successor being, at the time of his appointment, an actor in the Theatre Royal Covent Garden. Mr. Charles Kemble had been announced to perform the round of his favourite characters, prior to his final retirement from the stage; and during the progress of these performances, he was nominated to the office of "Examiner of all Theatrical Entertainments," vacant by the decease of the aforesaid George Colman. A gentleman more fitted for the situation could not possibly have been selected—a fine scholar, an experienced artist, and one bearing the high and honoured dramatic name of Kemble, might justly claim, on his retirement from public life, so suitable a reward for long years of hard service. Had this place been conferred upon Mr. Kemble when he had ceased to be a member of the stage he had so long adorned, there could have been no ground for a single remark;

but the selection of a performer in any one theatre (especially the rival patent house) to sit in judgment upon the forthcoming novelties of the other, to enable him to be possessed of the titles, plots, ingredients, &c., of those novelties; in fact, to put the whole disposable force of an establishment in the hands of its supposed enemy, was as novel as it was alarming an arrangement; but we will entertain the subject from its commencement. Immediately on the demise of Mr. Colman being made known to me, I applied to the proper quarter to ascertain who was to be his successor, as this document will show:

"Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,  
"October 28, 1836.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Will you do me the favour to inform me to whom, in the absence of any reader being appointed to succeed Mr. Colman, I am to send the MSS. of the new pieces about to be produced at this theatre?

"I am, my dear Sir,

"Yours faithfully,

"A. BUNN."

"T. B. Mash, Esq., &c. &c."

And the next day I received the subjoined official reply:

"St. James's, October 29, 1836.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Perhaps, before this reaches you, the Gazette will have informed you that Charles Kemble, Esq., is appointed Examiner of Plays, &c., in the room of the late Mr. Colman.

"Mr. Kemble resides at No. 11, Park-place, St. James's.

"Yours very truly,

"T. B. MASH."

"To A. Bunn, Esq."

On the day I received this reply, I despatched a communication, of which the following is a copy, to the Lord Chamberlain, accompanied with the manuscript of a new entertainment for which I sought the necessary license at his Lordship's hands:

"Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,  
"October 29, 1836.

"MY LORD,

"I take the liberty of transmitting to your Lordship an

entertainment, entitled, '*The Yankee Pedlar*,' for your Lordship's license, which has only been awaiting the appointment of a successor to Mr. Colman. I beg leave to direct your Lordship's attention to the absolute necessity of the concerns of so large an establishment as this being regulated with as much caution as possible—not merely from the rivalry, which has always existed between the two patent houses, but from the injury this theatre has sustained (since the character of the other was last year so suddenly changed) by many of its productions being forestalled, if only in the tide. Without, therefore, meaning the slightest disrespect to the gentleman your Lordship has been pleased to appoint the reader of dramatic entertainments, (than whom no one can be by attainments more highly qualified,) I cannot view, without a reasonable apprehension, the selection of a performer and proprietor of the rival house deputed to sit in judgment upon the *productions of this*. In such feeling, I have presumed to send this MS. direct to your Lordship, on whose impartiality, discretion, and high character all must place the utmost reliance.

"I have the honour to be,

"My Lord,

"Your Lordship's obedient servant,

"A. BUNN."

"To the Marquis Conyngham, &c. &c. &c.

"Lord Chamberlain."

This was despatched on Saturday, October 29th, and on Tuesday, November the 1st, I was favoured with the subjoined first official communication from the new examiner:

"11, Park-place, St. James's,

"November 1, 1836.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have this day, only, received a manuscript entitled, '*The Yankee Pedlar*,' which I perceive by the play-bills is advertised for performance this evening. To prove my desire to do every thing in my power, consistently with my duty, to forward the interests of the theatre over which you preside, I have read it, and forwarded my application to the Lord Chamberlain for his license. I beg, however, to direct your attention to the irregularity of the proceeding, and to request that, in future, any manuscripts which you may desire to have licensed, may be forwarded to me in proper time. My messenger is this moment returned from Dudley-house; the Lord Chamberlain is unfortunately not at home; but I am convinced that he

would not be displeased if, under the present circumstances, the piece were to be acted. The license shall be forwarded as soon as even I receive it.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"C. KEMBLE."

"To A. Bunn, Esq."

In the first place, to exculpate myself from the charge of apparent neglect, and in the next place, to possess Mr. Kemble of the light in which I viewed his extraordinary position, I immediately sent this reply to his letter:

"Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,

"Nov. 1, 1836.

"DEAR SIR,

"I am favoured with your letter, and in reply thereto I beg to enclose you two documents, viz. No. 1, a copy of my letter to Mr. Mash, inquiring to whom the MSS. of this theatre were to be sent until Mr. Colman's successor was appointed; and No. 2, a copy of my letter to the Lord Chamberlain, enclosing the MS. of '*The Yankee Pedlar*,' on hearing of your appointment.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"A. BUNN."

"C. Kemble, Esq."

My answer did not appear to be at all satisfactory to the reigning authorities, and I had therefore, two days afterwards, an official rejoinder to the letter I addressed the Lord Chamberlain on the 29th of October—slightly smacking at the same time of dictation—which, together with my reply, are submitted to the reader:

"Lord Chamberlain's Office,

"November 3, 1836.

"SIR,

"In the absence of Mr. Mash, I am directed by the Lord Chamberlain to acquaint you, that all entertainments of the stage to be submitted for his Lordship's license, are to be forwarded to the residence of Charles Kemble, Esq., the Examiner, No. 11, Park-place, St. James's.

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"WILLIAM MARTINS.

"Alfred Bunn, Esq.,

"Theatre Royal, Drury Lane."

" Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,  
" Nov. 3, 1836.

" SIR,

" In compliance with the provisions of the Act of Parliament therein provided, it is my duty to transmit the MSS. of this theatre to his Majesty's Lord Chamberlain, for his Lordship's license, and I shall not fail to do so.

" I am, Sir,

" Your obedient servant,

" A. BUNN."

" W. Martins, Esq., &c. &c. &c."

The Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, and the Lord Chamberlain's office were now at complete issue; the high chief officer of the one establishment requiring all our productions to be examined by a performer at the rival theatre, and the humble chief officer of the other establishment positively refusing to comply with such requisition. It was privately hinted to me that the King would take away the patent, and moreover remove me from his Majesty's household, to which I was then attached, if I resisted the authority of his Chamberlain; but I told the gentleman (also of the Court) giving me this hint, that if the King sent me to the Tower, I should continue to act upon the principle I had taken up. My argument was not based upon any personal objection, for I have before stated my opinion of Mr. Kemble's great qualifications for the office; and I do not hesitate to state my conviction, that he would never have permitted advantage to have been taken of the official station he occupied, to the detriment of the theatre against which his histrionic exertions were then being nightly made. But the slightest accident—to which even the most studious watchfulness is sometimes subject—might have betrayed, unknown to Mr. Kemble, the name and incidents of a pantomime, or any such novelty, respecting which secrecy is so essential; and in that case it would have been impossible to draw the line of difference between the two occupations. It might not have been a question much worth discussion, had the time of Mr. Kemble's retirement nearly arrived; but his appointment was gazetted the 28th of October, and he retired from the stage on the 23d of December; and, owing to the great attraction caused by the announcement of his secession, I have reason to believe that an application was made to the King to allow him, in his office of examiner, an extension of time to which, on entering upon its duties, his performances on the stage had been limited. Although his Majesty very justly withheld any such permission, Mr. Kemble was full two months a performer at, and proprietor of, Covent:



Garden Theatre, and subsequently a large proprietor, while, as examiner of plays, he was in possession of all the movements of Drury Lane Theatre. My determination not to give up the point led to a private conference between Mr. Martins and myself, at which I pointed out the strong objections I entertained, founded on no feelings of disrespect to the Lord Chamberlain, but on those of safety to myself. I reduced this statement to writing, at Mr. Martins' request, and on his promise to submit it to the Lord Chamberlain, to meet whom he was then going to Brighton; and from which place he despatched a demi-official reply to the memoranda (for they were nothing more) I put into his hands at this interview:

"The Pavilion, Brighton,  
"December 31, 1836.

"SIR,

"I felt it due to you to forward immediately to the Lord Chamberlain the memorandum you put into my hands on Thursday last; and I am directed by his lordship to assure you, that he fully appreciates the expressions of respect for his authority it contains, and will consider your compliance with the established regulations of his department, which apply equally to all the theatres within his jurisdiction, as a proof of that disposition on your part. The Lord Chamberlain directs me to add, that he is sure you will receive every attention, as it is his desire you should, from all the officers under him with whom you may be concerned; his lordship is at the same time totally at a loss to conceive how any examiner of plays, in the performance of his duties, can in any way prejudice your individual and personal interests, or the interests of the Theatre Royal Drury Lane.

"I remain, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"WILLIAM MARTINS."

"To A. Bunn, Esq. &c. &c. &c.

"Theatre Royal, Drury Lane."

With the departure, however, of Mr. Kemble from the stage, the more glaring cause of my objection departed also: but even now, while I admit that a more competent, or worthier officer for such place cannot be found than Mr. Charles Kemble, I very much doubt if it ought to be filled by any one having an interest, and especially a vested one, in either of the patent theatres.

Contrasted with the stipulations, elsewhere referred to, made by Sir E. Bulwer, previous to his play of the *Duchess de la Val-*

*lière* being placed in my hands, may be mentioned the conduct of Mr. Sheridan Knowles, who at this very period of Sir Edward's play appearing at Covent Garden owing to such stipulations, obliged me with an invitation to a family dinner, expressly to hear *his* play, read BEFORE *I made any bargain for it!* But with so justly celebrated a man as Knowles, this work of confidence, however complimentary, was barely necessary—still he not only paid me the courtesy, but cheerfully made some trifling alterations I took the liberty of suggesting to him.

I take this opportunity of stating, that I hope my valued friend, of whose renown the public is too jealous to be willing to lose a particle of it, will pardon me for expressing the wish I felt on the occasion in question, that he would confine the exercise of his abilities to the profession of author, without ranging into that of actor. I participate in this feeling with myriads of his admirers, at the same time I can make allowances for Mr. Knowles' selection of double duty. He is a man of less vanity than most men equally gifted would be; it is not, therefore, on the score of conceit that he has taken to wear the buskin, but his discerning eye has perceived how wantonly overpaid actors are, while the finest writers in existence are comparatively neglected; and if, with large claims upon the energies of his mind, he can by the representation of some of its creations, make more money than he can by the creations themselves, he is probably justified in passing by the mere wish of his admirers, in providing for the proper support of "the ties of the heart." The play in question was entitled *The Wrecker's Daughter*, and its production was attended with unqualified success; but the character sustained by Mr. Knowles ought to have been sustained by Mr. Forrest. The latter gentleman probably felt justified in refusing a character which was not rendered so prominent by the author as the part of the heroine. Yet, considering the public favour extended to Mr. Forrest, also that the play was the production of the first dramatist of the times we live in, and that the part itself was the leading male one. I think my friend Forrest should have lent its performance the aid of his powerful talent. Here, again now, let the croakers for legitimacy take a lesson from the public, instead of trying to teach them one. *The Wrecker's Daughter* is a beautiful composition, carried through and wrought up with great dramatic effect: the reputation of its author is guarantee for as much, without the addition of my feeble eulogy; but *certes* it would have been played to empty benches, had it not received timely relief, soon after its production, from the performance of the admirable ballet of *Le Diable Boiteux*, rendered popular by Mademoiselle Duvernay's lascivious *Cachouca* dance. Although it may be

said of this charming dancer what was said of the elder Vestris, "Ces gens-là prouvent bien qu'ils ont l'esprit aux talons ;" yet I suspect it will not be admitted by the legitimatists, that her attraction ought to have surpassed that of any work proceeding from the pen of Mr. Knowles. I do not think it ought ; but here comes the great question—because there chanced to be a first-rate dancer in a ballet of action, it possessed greater allurements for the public than a noble drama, written by our first dramatist, owing to the want of a first-rate actor in it. This is a second edition of what "my learned friend" Sergeant Talfourd styled "Shakspeare and Shakspeare's representative ;" but it has ever been so, and will be, unto the end of time.

The public at this time had enough for their money ; for although the admission was seven shillings, we gave them Mr. Forrest and a new tragedy ; Mademoiselle Duvernay and a new ballet ; *The Siege of Corinth*, with Rossini's music, and the groundwork of Lord Byron's poem, and the whole operative force of the theatre ; one scene of which, *Corinth, from the Acropolis*, wherein was given that exquisite apostrophe,

"There is a light cloud by the moon—  
'Tis passing, and will pass full soon," &c.

was worth any reasonable price of admission to gaze upon. But the maggot in Mr. Bull's head was biting in another direction, for I should think that the receipts to any one of the concluding performances of Mr. Charles Kemble doubled ours to all the attractions we could put before the town. Here comes the question of the public dramatic *animus* again, and here again the view I have taken upon that point is fully borne out ; the people flocked (as they ought on this particular occasion) to an individual performance, but they kept away (as they ought *not* to have done) from an admirable *tout ensemble*.

Another innovation on the patent rights of Drury Lane and Covent Garden was sanctioned at this time, and introduced under their very noses—the Italian Opera Buffa. The proprietors of these theatres consider this fresh inroad in their very neighbourhood as a great grievance ; and taken into consideration the many others they have been oppressed by, they were justified in such conclusion ; but, speaking merely as the *quondam* manager of their property, I do not conceive the slightest injury was sustained by these performances. They were conducted with great spirit and propriety by Mr. Mitchell, and were of that nature which was not likely to draw into the vortex of their exchequer much chance money, being principally dependent on the caprice of subscription.

I chronicle this period with much regret ; not at all on account of a serious accident I met with at the time, but from a more serious loss the public met with, in the death of the individual I had been visiting, when the said accident happened. I had known and respected Grimaldi in private life for many years, and followed the world's wake in admiration of his public talents. Four seasons preceding the one now referred to, Grimaldi applied to me to procure an engagement for the son who had caused him so much sorrow ; but (being as lost to the stage as he was to his family) a compliance with his wish was utterly impracticable. I made a bold push for the services of the father, which turned out equally so, as will be manifested on a perusal of his letter. And who is there would not like to see an epistle from the illustrious JOE, descriptive of his shattered state in his latter days ? Mark the apprehensions of the old war-horse, should he again hear the sound of the trumpet's battle-blast !

“ Monday, Oct. 8, 1832.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ Being out of London, I did not receive yours till Thursday last ; consequently could not answer it till the present moment. I sincerely regret that nothing can be done for my son, as I am confident you would find him a valuable acquisition in every department. Salary, as I previously stated, would be a secondary consideration, as a permanent situation is all that is required. An article perhaps of three or five years might still (*by your kind interference*) not be objected to, commencing at 3*l.* per week. Should an opportunity present itself, I hope and trust you will interest yourself in his behalf, for the sake of *Old Joe and auld lang sine*. With regard to myself, I cannot express myself in terms sufficiently to return you my sincere thanks for the good opinion you still have of me, and of my poor humble abilities. It is certainly a great consolation to know, in my solace, that I am as much respected and esteemed in my retirement as when in my public character. Your kind offer to me to superintend the forthcoming pantomime (*however gratifying to my feelings*) I shall never forget, but must decline. I could no more sit in an arm-chair to instruct a pantomime, than I am capable of jumping out of a garret window without injuring myself—for this reason, should any thing go contrary to my wishes, all ailments would for a moment vanish ; for I must exert myself, which in all probability might end in a bed of sickness, and might terminate my existence. All that I can offer is this,—I have as many models and tricks as would furnish six or seven pantomimes, of which you may select what is necessary

for your *Xmas novelty*. Independent of which, I have a good opening, which you may inspect, and also can upon a pinch assist you with a comic scene or two of business, if required. This I can promise without *fee or reward*, provided an arrangement can be made for my son. I have quitted London entirely, where, if you answer this, or may have occasion so to do, address No. 6, Prospect Row, Woolwich, Kent, near the Royal Dock Yard; where, should time or opportunity occur, nothing would give me greater pleasure than seeing you.

"I remain

"Yours sincerely,

"J. GRIMALDI."

"To Alfred Bunn, Esq."

With a full recollection of the offer contained in this communication, I rode up on horseback to Grimaldi's house in Southampton-street, Pentonville, where I had a pleasant interview with the battered veteran. He opened his casket of pantomimic wonders; and after explaining any mystery I was unacquainted with, presented me with the treasure. I put three or four very small models in my hat, and the box containing the others he courteously sent after me to the theatre. I was walking my horse down Pentonville-hill, the reins hanging loosely from the main, and was adjusting poor Joe's mementos, which were extremely inconveniencing my *caput*, when a rascally urchin, who intended no doubt to throw a stone at his play-fellow, instead of so doing cut my horse's eye,\* which caused him instantly to rear up, and to deposit my *corpus* on the pommel of the saddle. The contusion was a severe one, and with difficulty I mustered strength enough to ride on to the theatre, where I was laid up for the following fortnight. That was however a trifling affair, and distressed poor JOE far more than it did me, and his mind only obtained complete relief on hearing of the success of our pantomime. Two days before its production I received from him the last few lines I did receive, and that probably he ever wrote, and as such I give them a place. Much

\* The lad ran away, for fear of what lads call a licking. But to show, the difference of character in different countries, I venture to mention an anecdote of another lad, who, under nearly similar circumstances did *not* run away. In 1822, I was walking arm-in-arm with Mr. Beazley past Trinity College, Dublin, when a youthful Hibernian, in aiming a stone at one of his companions, very nearly hit Beazley in the eye. The boy, without betraying a symptom of apprehension, or even dreaming of making a retreat, pulled up what little slack his nether garments could boast of, and passing him by, archly remarked, "Your eye was well out of that."

cannot be said in praise of their poetical merits, but they possess enough of sounder stuff to show that his heart was still in the cause in which he had, through years of untired efforts, so industriously and so successfully laboured:

" 33, Southampton street, Pentonville,  
" December 24, 1836.

" My dear Alfred Bunn,  
To you I cannot come—  
But depend upon seeing me soon;  
I have taken a pill,  
Which remains with me still,  
Which confines me to-day to my room.

" Soon will come Monday;  
Let me here from you Tuesday :\*

\* The rhythm here is lost sight of, but greater poets than poor Jox have been at a loss, before now, for rhyme, as shall be shown. Dr. Fitzgerald, of the Dublin College, wrote a poem entitled the *Academic Sportsman*, descriptive of the travels of a student in the recess; and, in apostrophising a village called *Tipperary*, he uses this couplet:

" And thee, dear village, loveliest of the clime,  
Fain would I name thee, but I can't in rhyme!"

In addition to his other labours, the doctor announced his discovery of a planet to rival the *Georgium Sidus*, and the Trinity boys christened it *Anser*. The two effusions of the doctor's genius drew forth the following remarks:

" A Goose there was in sad quandary  
To end his rhyme with Tipperary :  
Long laboured he through January,  
But all in vain for Tipperary—  
Toiled THIRTY DAYS† in February  
But toiled in vain for Tipperary !  
Exploring Bailey's dictionary,  
He found no rhyme for Tipperary :  
Searched Hebrew text, and commentary,  
But searched in vain for Tipperary :  
For still the verse would run contrary,  
Whene'er he turned to Tipperary ;  
The stubborn verse he ne'er could vary  
To that unlucky Tipperary !  
Consulting, then, his mother Mary,‡  
She knew know rhyme for Tipperary ;  
Searched every pan within her dairy,  
No pan presented Tipperary !

†Tough labour this, when you work so hard as to make a month contain an additional day.

‡ *Mrs. Bone*, his mother Mary  
Kept a dairy in Tipperary !

Till that time shall feel in distress :

May your efforts applauded

Be amply rewarded,

And your troubles be crown'd with success

"Yours sincerely,

"JOE GRIMALDI."

Our recollections of, and associations with, Christmas, and consequently of, and with, Grimaldi, are amongst the earliest and happiest of our thoughts. We can never forget our burst of enjoyment on catching the first accents of that many toned voice, and the first glimpse of that party-coloured face, when, year after year, we have squeezed into any part of the theatre his attraction had left standing room in. Has there been any social happiness of after days, the memory of which can impart such true delight, as a recurrence to those green and bright hours of life's unclouded boyhood? Oh, no—the conflict of manhood and the effort of age are but vain and fruitless struggles, from which the mind too often recoils, to revel in the retrospect of long departed pleasures. Grimaldi's death soon followed the scene I have alluded to, having occurred on the thirty-first of May, 1837. Colman, and Bannister, and Grimaldi! Well hath the rival of the Teian bard sung:

"We are fallen upon evil days,  
Star after star decays."

Good-night, old fellow! The voluptuary of by-gone times, who offered a reward for any new gratification, would much more gladly have paid it for the restoration of many an old one, had he only known thee. But to the busy world again.

A few days after the introduction of our pantomime at Drury Lane Theatre, a play in five acts, entitled the "*Duchess de la Vallière*," written by the author of "*Eugene Aram*," "*The Last Days of Pompeii*," &c., was produced at Covent Garden Theatre, and to the published copies of that work is prefixed an "advertisement" from which the following is an extract:

"This play (with the above preface) was written in the autumn and winter of 1835. It was submitted to no other opinion than that of Mr. Macready, with whom the author had the honour of a personal acquaintance; and who, on perusal, was obli-

He then invoked the aid of fairy,  
But vainly prayed for Tipperary :"  
At length he searched the Zodiac riry  
And ANSER cackled Tipperary !"

gingly anxious for its performance at Drury Lane. The manager of that theatre wished, naturally perhaps, to see the manuscript before he hazarded the play; the author (perhaps no less naturally) declined a condition from a manager, which was precisely of that nature which no author, of moderate pretensions, concedes to a publisher. A writer can have but little self-respect, who does not imagine, in any new experiment in literature, that no risk can be greater than his own."

The writer of this precious piece of modesty, Mr. E. L. Bulwer, not having condescended to mention the cognomen of the particular manager herein alluded to, notwithstanding that in another part of the said advertisement he ostentatiously parades the names of two others, who, "at once" and "liberally" acceded to his conditions, it becomes the duty of the delinquent, who could do such an audacious thing as to refuse to pay a sum of money for a piece of which he had never read a line, to proclaim himself. It was stipulated, at the time the subject was first introduced, that the transaction should be kept secret, and by me that stipulation, nonsensical as it appeared, was inviolably maintained; but Mr. Bulwer having thought proper to dissolve the spell, and unveil such an important mystery, there can be no possible reason why I should not follow the example he has set.

In the beginning of March, this said year of 1836, Mr. Macready came into my room, and with a self-satisfied smile said,

"What will you give for a first-rate play by a first-rate man?"

"A first-rate price," said I; "and who's your friend?"

"I am not at liberty to mention names," answered he.

"Then send me the piece, and you shall have my answer in four-and-twenty hours," said I.

"I do not think the author will do that," rejoined he.

"Pray, have *you* read it?" inquired Pilgarlick.

"I have, and think very highly of it," answered he.

"Well, doctors, you know, may differ; and I should like to know upon what grounds I, who have all the risk to run, am to be deprived of the same opportunity of judging accorded to you, who are a comparative cipher in the affair," said I.

"Well, well, I understand you are free then to receive the play, and I will therefore see the author, try and get his permission to mention his name, and give you some idea of his terms," ejaculated Mr. Macready, and out he went.

The following day brought another interview, at which Mr. Macready conveyed to me the important intelligence that the author was no less a personage than *Edward Lytton Bulwer*;



that he required a considerable sum to be paid down on the delivery of the manuscript, and that the communication was to be considered altogether private! I took the liberty of saying, that although Mr. Bulwer might be considered a first-rate novelist, he could not possibly be considered a first-rate dramatist, and that I declined making any such blind bargain. We parted on the understanding that I should write my sentiments on the business part of this interview to Mr. Bulwer, which I instantly did, to which I received the following reply:—

“ Albany, March 7, 1836.

“ Sir,

“ Before I reply to the more business part of your letter, allow me to set both parties right with regard to a seeming misunderstanding. *I made* no communications. I rather imagine I was the person who *received* them. I had an offer from another theatre. Previous to my decision, I felt obliged (according to an old promise) to show the play to Mr. Macready, and *in some measure to allow him the first choice!* Mr. Macready professed himself so much pleased with the play, that he wrote me word he would speak to you, concealing my name. He afterwards called on me and made certain propositions, which I considered fair and liberal, but which I was obliged to modify in some instances, viz: to limit the copyright to the theatre to three years, and to require a certain portion of the money on giving the MS., though perfectly willing, should the play fail of an adequate run, to return it.

“ With regard to showing the MS. to you, sir, in your capacity of manager, while I allow it quite natural in you to wish *to see the play before you produce it!* yet, having in no instance since my first publication, allowed the purchaser to inspect any work of mine in MS., having always found such reputation as I may possess a sufficient guarantee for its contents; so, on the other hand, it is natural for me not to depart from a rule hitherto carefully maintained on one side, and cheerfully complied with on the other. Nor can it be from any want of respect for your judgment, or deficiency in courtesy to yourself, that I am compelled to adhere to this maxim! Had I the pleasure of your personal acquaintance, *and had you not been the manager of the theatre!* I might naturally have wished to benefit from the suggestions of a longer dramatic experience than my own.

“ I fear, as it is, that our difference upon this point will constitute an insuperable objection to arrangements between us, unless any middle course could be suggested, which is only likely to arise from a personal interview on the matter. At present I

shall take leave to consider the negotiation begun by Mr. Macready at an end; and have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"E. L. BULWER."

"P.S.—When I consented to the request of Mr. Macready to mention to you my name, I did so on the understanding, which, no doubt, he communicated to you, that it was a strictly private and confidential communication."

The one great point of requiring me to buy what the profane call a *pig in a poke*, not being conceded, the matter, after a letter or two more, dropped.

I have taken the liberty of marking in italics some particular passages in the preceding letter, as requiring particular notice. Mr. Bulwer says, he felt obliged to offer Mr. Macready, *in some measure, the first choice* of his play—an admission which, considering Mr. Macready was not the manager of any theatre at the time, and not, therefore, in a situation to produce it, carries a very droll sort of obligation along with it. Mr. Bulwer farther says, "*it is quite natural in you to wish to see the play before you produce it!*" (N.B.—It would puzzle the devil himself to produce it, unless he *could* see it!) And finally says, that "*had I not been the manager of the theatre, I should have read it!*" I must confess, this beats all the logic I ever listened to, hollow. An actor brings his manager a play which, in his opinion, (actors are invariably bad judges of the general effects of a piece, and this actor as bad as the rest, because they think only of their own part in it,) is a very fine one, requires a sum of money for it before the MS. can be given up, and is strictly prohibited from telling the author's name! To comply with such preposterous expectations, would be to admit that the actor was a first-rate judge, the author an eminent dramatist, and the manager an irredeemable fool. I looked upon the first lunge made at me as savouring very strongly of conceit or humbug; nor was the impression altogether removed, on learning that the author, whose pretensions I had questioned, bore the redoubtable name of *Edward Lytton Bulwer*. Recollecting that our greatest living dramatist Knowles, had invariably done me the honour to read to me, or allow me to read, any piece of his before we struck a bargain, I considered the exactions of an untried dramatist bordering somewhat on the burlesque. Nor do the arguments in Mr. Bulwer's letter, nor his advertisement, at all justify his demand, inasmuch as there is a vast difference between the positions of a manager and a publisher. Mr. Bulwer being a popular novelist, there are few bibliopoliſts who

would not, on the strength of his name, purchase any stated work in preparation by him before it was completed. There are sufficient admirers of his peculiar style, amongst the reading class of the community, to warrant a return of their speculation; and a publisher, having but that portion of the public to deal with, may rely on realizing a profit. It is a very different thing with a manager; for after satisfying *his own* judgment, he has, to a certain extent, to succumb to that of the performers, to pass the censorship of the Lord Chamberlain, the perilous ordeal of a mixed and multipotent audience, the equally formidable decision of the press, and a variety of other "ills" that (theatrical) "flesh is heir to," before any prospect can present itself of repaying the outlay such a piece entails. Now, look at the result of all this swagger on the one side, and common prudence on the other. *The Duchess de la Vallière* was received on the first night of its performance with that fallacious hubbub the *claqueurs* of a party can always create; but it was considered, dramatically speaking, a failure, and was a positive loss to the treasury of the theatre. It would be an insult to an English audience to suppose it would have been otherwise; for a work of more offensive construction, and in some respects impious language, was never submitted to their decision. About the period of its preparation, the reader and examiner of plays, the ever-regarded and regretted George Colman,\* was on his death-bed, or he never would have sanctioned such exclamations as the following, put into the mouth; be it remembered, not of a

\* This reference to the severity which distinguished Mr. Colman's censorship, when contrasted with the license evinced in his own works before he was examiner of plays, is naturally subject to animadversion. I once went with Elliston in hope of persuading him to remove some objections he had made to parts of a play, as bordering on the profane, but he was immovable. "And now," said he, rubbing his hands, "let us go into the next room and have a glass of wine." We did so; and in the course of conversation he inquired after his former partner in the Haymarket Theatre, and his wife.

"His wife is dying, I fear," said Elliston.

"Dying! bless my soul, I'm sorry for that—let me see, if I recollect rightly, she was his servant?" observed the censor.

"I have heard so," responded the lessee.

"Then I hope," said Colman, "she'll carry a good character to her NEXT PLACE!!!" It might seem strange that the profaneness of a play should be questioned by one who could make this remark; but he has frequently said to me, that there was a vast difference between the fulfilment of a public duty to which he was bound by oath, and which might influence the opinions of all classes of people, and mere chit-chat with a private friend.

confirmed dignitary of the Church, but of a soldier, a stranger to its purity, yet assuming its garb and language:

“The Pharisees  
Had priests that gave their SAVIOUR to the cross!”

Again,

“And seek some sleek Iscariot of the church.  
To sell SALVATION for the thirty pieces!”

And,

“My heart's wild sea is hush'd, and o'er the waves  
The SAVIOUR walks!”

It was considered, and so it was chronicled, and set down by the party of which Mr. Bulwer is the nucleus, that I had committed an unpardonable offence, in treating with such apparent contempt their illustrious Coryphæus. I should be very sorry if any impression, arising out of these observations, went abroad, that I sought to depreciate, in a general point of view, Mr. Bulwer's great abilities. Such is not the case. I have been repeatedly charmed by a perusal of some of his works of fiction; but I have found no reason, from the subsequent works he has produced on the stage, to alter the opinion I had formed, from witnessing and reading the *Duchess de la Valière*, that his mind is not theatrically constituted. His plays may be crammed down the throats of a probationary audience by the expedients resorted to on such occasions—a liberal issue of “orders,” a judicious disposal of the “Sons of Freedom,” the smirking of a *soi-disant* fashionable party located in a private box, with its blushing author sitting in its centre, and other such prepared quackery; but they will never hold permanent rank in the dramatic literature of the country.

It will probably be alleged as a set-off to the exorbitancy of Mr. Bulwer's demand of payment in advance, that he was perfectly willing, “should the play fail of an adequate run, to return it.” Most other authors, and those of far greater repute than Mr. Bulwer ever will be, have been content to receive their money in proportion to, and even after, the adequate run of their piece; added to which, we must remember, without at all impeaching Mr. Bulwer's good intentions, the old proverb saith, that the worst paymaster on earth, save he who never pays, is he who

pays beforehand. I have adopted, without offence I hope, the nomenclature of *Mister* Bulwer, because the learned gentleman at the time I speak of, had not written himself into the dignity of a BARONET!!

Having slightly alluded to the circumstance of my examination before the commissioners appointed by his late Majesty to inquire into the fees, &c. of the officers on the civil list establishment, I subjoin a copy of the summons which led to the same:

"SIR,

"I am desired by the commissioners appointed by his Majesty for inquiring into the fees and emoluments of every officer on the civil list establishment, to request that you will do them the favour to attend them at their office, on Monday next the 27th instant, at twelve o'clock in the afternoon, for the purpose of affording to the commissioners, such information as your experience will enable you to do, upon the subject of the fees now demanded and received by certain officers connected with his Majesty's household, upon licenses issued by the Lord Chamberlain, authorizing the representation of new theatrical entertainments, &c.

"I am Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"RICH. HANKINS, Sec.

"Office of Inquiry.

"St. James's Palace,

"June 24, 1838."

(Adjoining the Board of Green Cloth.)

The report made to his Majesty by the Marquis Conyngham, the Earl of Albemarle, and Mr. Baring, bears date the 28th of December 1836, and was printed by the King's commands shortly afterwards. It contains so important a record of the past and present state of the case, that it would be losing an important document to omit it. The first report is relative to

#### "FEES ON THEATRICAL PATENTS AND LICENSES.

"These fees appear to have existed for more than fifty years, and are payable to certain officers in the Lord Chamberlain's department, by the parties to whom the patents or licenses are granted.

"In the year 1835 they appear to have realized to Mr. Mash, 116*l.* 2*s.*; to Mr. Martin's 45*l.* 9*s.*; and to the office porter,

about 5*l*. The fees consists of the following particulars, viz.

	Fees upon a Patent for a Theatre.*			Fees upon a License for the Season.			Fees upon a License for a limited number of nights.			Fees upon a License for one night.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
T. B. Mash, Esq., as Comptroller	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
as Secretary	3	17	6	10	15	0	3	4	6	1	1	6
W. Martins, Esq., as Clerk	1	18	9	2	13	0	2	1	0	1	6	0
Assistant Clerks for entering the Patent	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Office Porter	0	5	0	0	5	0	0	5	0	0	2	6
Total	28	1	3	13	13	0	5	10	6	2	10	0

"We are not prepared to recommend that these should be at once abolished, but that for the present they should be continued and carried to the account of the fee-fund; and that the officers now in the enjoyment of them should be compensated upon the same principle and in the same manner as we have already suggested to your Majesty in respect to the fees of honour, and no successors to the present holders should be allowed to receive them, or derive any benefit therefrom.

"Looking, however, to the nature of these fees, we trust that the accumulation of the fee-fund will admit, before long, of their reduction and ultimate abolition, particularly with reference to the fees on swearing in officers and tradesmen, and upon theatrical licenses; inasmuch as, in the first case, a heavy charge by way of fee is likewise imposed upon the same parties for their warrants of appointment; and, in the second case, the fees now charged upon theatrical or musical licenses for one night, or for a limited number of nights, appear to us to bear hardly upon the individuals to whom such licenses are granted.

"We have also had under our notice an annuity granted long ago by the theatre of Drury Lane to Mr. Mash of the Lord Chamberlain's office. The whole circumstances of the transaction are detailed in the evidence taken before the committee of the House of Commons on dramatic literature, in the year 1832. Mr. Mash has received nothing under the annuity since the beginning of the year 1836, and an intimation has been given to him that no farther instalment will be paid.

"The payment has ceased; Mr. Mash is about to retire from

\* If two or more persons are named in the patent, each party is charged with the fees.

your Majesty's service, and the regulations we propose will prevent any such transaction for the future."

And this report is immediately followed by another relative to

**"FEE ON LICENSING THEATRICAL ENTERTAINMENTS.**

"This is a fee of 2*l.* 2*s.* for every play, song, or other theatrical entertainment licensed under the provisions of the Act of the 10th George II., c. 28, by the Lord Chamberlain, previously to public representation. It is payable by the managers of the several theatres within the jurisdiction of the Lord Chamberlain, to the examiner of theatrical entertainments, and produced in the year 1835 the sum of 29*l.* 18*s.*

"The payment of this fee appears to have existed for nearly a century; and it was stated to us by the late Mr. Colman, that although he considered himself clearly entitled to the fee of 2*l.* 2*s.* for every song or short piece licensed, as well as for every play however long, yet in practice he had sometimes only charged one fee upon several new songs licensed upon the occasion of a performer's benefit, and had relinquished his fee altogether in some special cases.

"The fee is not charged for a song which is written in, and forms part of any play or opera; nor is it paid in cases where the license is refused by the Lord Chamberlain.

"We are of opinion that fees of this nature may with propriety be continued, provided their amount is commensurate with the labour and responsibility cast upon the examiner, and not, as at present, remaining an unvarying fee of 2*l.* 2*s.* upon every occasion, whether the new production be short or long—a system which, in its operation, presses unduly and heavily upon the managers of those theatres at which new pieces of one and two acts are frequently produced under the sanction of the Lord Chancellor's license. In this view of the subject we are fully borne out by the opinion of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on dramatic literature, whose report to that House, in the month of July 1832, upon the subject of the fees on licenses, was as follows: 'Your Committee would recommend some revision in the present system of fees to the censor, so (for instance) that the license of a song, and the license of a play, may not be indiscriminately subject to the same charge.'

"Having fully considered this subject, we are induced to recommend to your Majesty's consideration, that the following would be a fair and proper scale of fees, to be in future payable to the examiner upon licensing all theatrical entertainments, namely—

"For a License for every Dramatic piece of three or more acts	£2 0 0
For a License for every Dramatic piece of one or two acts, or for a Pantomime containing prose or poetry	1 0 0
For a License for a Song, Address, Prologue or Epilogue	9 5 0

"The death of Mr. Colman having caused a vacancy in the appointment of examiner, the Lord Chamberlain has stated that his successor has been appointed, with a distinct understanding that the scale of fees would be subject to revision. We consider that the scale proposed by us will afford a fair and adequate remuneration for the office, provided the salary now payable to the examiner of plays under your Majesty's warrant is increased to the extent of about 50*l.* per annum."

These extracts will serve as a guide for any distressed manager to know how to steer in cases of doubt or difficulty; they will show what *has* been paid, and what is, at least for the present, expected *to* be paid: the most important part of the business after all, because he can then easily ascertain what "extracts" will be made from his own unfortunate pocket.

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## CHAPTER II.

Seven shillings and four shillings *versus* cleanliness, and dirt scale of both—Reform dinner—Interpretation of initials—Mr. C. Kemble and Washington Irving—Mr. Mathews and the tooth-pick—Contrast between the American and British stage—Dollars and pounds—Fair Rosamond and unfair treatment—Wide distinction between a good pleader and a bad judge—Petition to Parliament—Mr. Duncombe and the Chancellor of the Exchequer—An execution, and if possible a worse case of suspense—A den of thieves and a house of prayer—French actresses—How to engage them—A Clarendon dinner, and a jewel of a dessert—The result of all dealings with women.

My humble opinion upon the question of lowering the prices of the two patent theatres has been slightly disposed of in a preceding part of this work: but as we are now arrived at that particular juncture when the reduction, previously carried into effect at Covent Garden, compelled its adoption at Drury Lane, it is necessary to enter into it more minutely. Notwithstanding the attractions previously enumerated, and nightly exhibiting at the latter house, we were literally beaten clean out of the field in receipt—for although to a very successful pantomime were superadded the new ballet (Duvernay deemed a host in herself) and other popular amusements, yet the grand consideration *to a family at this time of the year* (because they *MUST* take their



children) lay between *seven* shillings and *four* shillings admission to the boxes. When it was beyond dispute that two children might go to that house for nearly the same sum as was asked for ONE at this house, and when it was taken into calculation that which all the said children wanted to see was the pantomime, it was obvious that parents would select the cheaper establishment, without reference to any other of the peculiar comforts to be enjoyed at the dearer one. It was evident, by the difference of attendance at the two theatres at this period, that although a clean and beautifully decorated house was pleasant to look at, and delightful to sit in, yet if nearly double the price was to be paid for the advantage, people preferred accommodation in one dirty and with doubtful decorations. The actors seeing this, and foreseeing that a continuance in the struggle to support legitimacy, or even decency, would probably end in a premature closing of the theatre, or a suspension of the pay list, besieged me with petitions to pocket my dignity, for the sake of pocketing something more substantial. Had I been a man of fortune, I would have seen them regularly — paid, first; but that not being the case, there appeared to be no alternative. The old prices were, therefore, only continued up to Saturday, December 31, 1836, on which evening, with a sigh for departed glory, I left the theatre with the feelings I presume a person to have who has done an action of which he is ashamed. The veriest cur who sneaks away with his tail between his legs, from the lash of the whip that has just clung round his loins, never cut a more contemptible figure in his own eyes. I never troubled myself about what others thought. My own mortification was quite enough to contend with. “The light of other days” was “faded” indeed, and I cursed the song, and myself for having written it. True it is, that the theatre which, until the said 31st, had been a comparative desert was now crowded to the roof, and the wiseacres who urged me on *malgré moi*, to this desecration, imagined that a splendid fortune would be speedily realized. The result was precisely what I anticipated—many more people came to the theatre, but its treasury was not the gainer. The lowering the prices did not make one proselyte. It only induced some who at the former price came but once, now to come twice; and the property was therefore *minus* in respectability and income. On the principle, however, laid down by that high authority in figures, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, let us submit to the examination of the reader a return of the first week of this innovation, (by some degrees the best week,) and compare it with the corresponding week of the year *before* at the old prices, and with the same week of the year *after*, at the present prices :

# RECEIPTS OF DRURY LANE THEATRE

For the first week in January, during three successive seasons, showing the fluctuation of such receipt, according to the altered scale of admission, in each season:

JANUARY 1836.			JANUARY 1837.			JANUARY 1838.		
PRICES OF ADMISSION.			PRICES OF ADMISSION.			PRICES OF ADMISSION.		
Boxes 7s.—Pit 3s. 6d.—First Gallery 2s.—Upper Gallery 1s.			Boxes 4s.—Pit 2s.—Galleries 1s.			Boxes 5s.—Pit 3s.—First Gallery 2s.—Upper Gallery 1s.		
£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Monday, January 4	299	6	Monday, January 2	209	19	Monday, January 1	254	13
Tuesday, January 5	287	17	Tuesday, January 3	244	12	Tuesday, January 2	242	7
Wednesday, January 6	255	16	Wednesday, January 4	228	14	Wednesday, January 3	278	5
Thursday, January 7	270	13	Thursday, January 5	209	6	Thursday, January 4	253	11
Friday, January 8	242	2	Friday, January 6	142	4	Friday, January 5	192	3
Saturday, January 9	203	16	Saturday, January 7	244	18	Saturday, January 6	179	11
Week's Receipt	£1,559	11	Week's Receipt	£1,279	13	Week's Receipt	£1,400	11
		6			6			0

By this comparative return, it will appear that by far the highest receipt for the week was at the seven shilling prices; the next highest was at the five shilling prices; and the lowest of all was at the four shilling prices: and to make it more conclusive, it may be as well to add, that the week's performances in January 1836 and 1838 were supported by no auxiliary aid, while that in January 1837 had the advantage of Mademoiselle Duvernay in a new ballet. If this be not a decisive answer to all future theorists in such matters, argument is entirely at an end. Facts are stubborn things: and though I very much doubt if even facts will convince a performer upon any point on which he has previously made up his mind, yet, in the hope of putting him at all events in the right path of conviction, I submit *him* this, to *me*, conclusive document. If he wants any other argument, I'll tell him one. An eccentric person once said to me—"Lay out your money in theatres, sir? Pooh! nonsense—lay it out in pigs, and then you will at least *get a squeak for it!*"

I was particularly abused at this time for having let Drury Lane Theatre to the Reformers of Middlesex, to enable them to give a dinner to their representatives, Messrs. Byng and Hume: but as the doing so enabled me (after paying every attendant expense, and the dramatic company the salaries they would have been entitled to, had the theatre been open for its ordinary purposes) to contribute £200 to a treasury groaning under the weight of—bills, not cash—the abuse had no remarkable effect. The upholders of the legitimate party at the other theatre thought it a positive outrage to suffer any such commemoration to take place in one of Shakspeare's temples. I thought so too; still "the art of our necessities is strange," and we are compelled much oftener than we like, to do things that go very much against our dispositions. But if it were deemed profane, in Shakesperian eyes, in *me* thus to desecrate the house, what must have been thought by them of "Shakspear's representative," who in a subsequent season, when he came into the management of the rival house, literally consented to commit the same atrocity? I cannot exactly state what they THOUGHT, but I can what they SAID. Why, the very blackguards who had so measurelessly pummelled me for *MY ACT*, applauded Mr. Macready to the skies for *his*. "It is a mad world, my masters!" and no mistake.

I don't enter into political discussions, but I enjoy a good laugh at the donkeys that do; and there are some people into whose "marrow, bones, and all," politics eat; and amongst these may fairly be classed your republicans and reformers. I was travelling some years since with Mr. Charles Kemble from

Bath, and, during the struggle between the dappled gray of morning and full daylight, two persons entered the coach, and entered into our conversation. Until they did so, we conceived them to be ordinary countrymen; but when, in reply to a question Kemble put to me respecting Washington Irving's Sketch-Book, I remarked how admirably he had dilated on the fine sight presented to the eye of an American on his first nearing the shores of Albion, "guarded by her ships of war, that prowled like guardian giants along the coasts," one of them instantly rejoined, "It's a much finer sight on approaching the shores of America, where no such guardian giants are necessary," our opinion was somewhat altered. We expected them to be a brace of republicans by this remark, and became convinced of it by the ensuing observation. "How extra loyal some of your countrymen are," said Jonathan to Charles Kemble, who bowed with silent dignity. "I attended a few days ago a public dinner at Bath, and had the calamity of sitting next to a man of that quality. The chairman very properly gave **THE KING**. I am as willing to drink that toast, particularly in his Majesty's own country, as any one; but when the aldermanic booby, wiping his bloated cheeks, and filling his glass to the brim, ejaculated with a mouthful of highly wrought toryism, **THE KING,—GOD BLESS HIM!** I felt disgusted, and went to the farther end of the room!"\* At this Drury Lane dinner I was accosted by some such fiery politician, though he possessed not the brains of our Bath traveller. "Pray, sir," said the Middlesex voter, seeing that I had been occupied in superintending the decorations, "Why d'ye give us those royal illuminations here?" (alluding to the letters **W. R.** at the back of the stage lighted with gas.) "This a'n't a king's business, it's a people's business we are come about!" Whereupon I ventured to say, "Those initials do not stand, sir, for **WILLIAM REX**, but for **WRETCHED RADICALS**;" and he, swallowing up the nonsense, replied, "Then in my opinion one's as impudent as t'other."

Well, these little diversions, these chequerings of a thea-

\* Mathews did this once at a public dinner, but from a different reason. He sat opposite to a gentleman who, after using his toothpick, put it by the side of his plate; on seeing which, his next neighbour took it up and did the same. Mathews, horrified, said quietly, "I beg your pardon, but do you know you are using that gentleman's toothpick?" Oh! yes, yes, was the cool reply, and in a few minutes more he repeated the dirty trick; when Mathews, unable to contain himself, bellowed out, "Sir, do you know that you are using that gentleman's toothpick?" "Well, sir, suppose I am, I mean to give it him back again!" was the answer of the offended citizen.

trical life, come in agreeably enough in the midst of the bad houses, the bad acting, and the bad weather, what managerial existence is apt to encounter, and bound to endure. It is pleasant to hear some bold boys proposing to bring about the salvation of their country, at all risks of endangering their own, promising to subscribe largely for the public good, without having any thing to subscribe, and feasting in the halls of party, while the inmates of their household hearths are loafless:

"But 'tis the age's foppery, and the beggar  
Lights his last fagot for his country's glory,  
Forgetting, while he eyes the straw-fed blaze,  
He must be cold to-morrow."

The success of Mr. Forrest set his beloved country in a blaze, which lighted up the ambition of many of its histrionic aspirants, some of whom came over the waste of waters to take shelter under the wing of the tragedian's success. I have brought before an English public several American performers, and have had great pleasure in so doing: but I must confess I have done so rather with a desire to trust to their opinion of themselves, than for any impression of my own as to its correctness. Our transatlantic friends are a singular mixture of good and bad taste—good, or they would not receive with so much admiration our best talent; and bad, or they would not countenance so much of their own indifferent talent. Forrest stands quite aloof from any participation in these remarks; but, with the exception of him, scarcely an American performer has passed muster upon our stage. Cooper, one of their greatest favourites, utterly failed here under the management of their own master of the ceremonies, Mr. Price. Mr. George Jones did not fail certainly, but "he died, and made no sign." Little Hill, in a peculiar delineation, has been favourably received; and Mr. Hackett, in certain Americanisms, has been accepted; but they both have broken down in any attempt at our regular drama. Mrs. Sharpe, (I believe a sister of Mr. Hackett's,) is a remarkably clever woman, and sustained the weight of some Shaksperian characters with a high order of talent. But then, again, Miss Placide was "weighed in the balance and found wanting." Mr. Forrest's *protégé*, this season, was a Mr. Barrett, a man of very gentlemanly manners, and excellent in all things save his profession, but in that he was considered here, as inefficient a representative of *Puff* in the *Critic* as ever played the part. My desire to forward Mr. Barrett's views was not

coincided in by the public, and with every wish, therefore, to advance him, I had not the power. There are few things that have caused me more uneasiness than the difficulty under which I have repeatedly laboured of not being able to place American performers in the light they wished before a London audience. It is impossible to convince them that you do not seek to crush their talent; and an attempt to persuade them that they will not be attractive is invariably answered by accounts of a fourteen hundred dollar benefit at New York, of clearing five thousand dollars at Philadelphia, of so many thousands at Boston, and of so many more in various parts of the United States. They cannot, or they will not, draw the line of distinction between the advanced degree of taste and refinement at which this country has naturally arrived, and the struggle which their own (like other countries in their infancy) is making to possess taste or refinement at all. We have had to go through the same fight ourselves, when we were emerging from barbarism into civilization, and our children should learn from our example, that it is impossible to become perfect at once. I have the utmost respect for the social qualities of the different American artistes whom I have met in London, to the number of whom I may add their most fortunate and popular comedian, Mr. Rice. His success has been obtained by his prudent adhesion to the personation of one class of character—a path, be it remembered, altogether untrodden. He has chosen for his motto, "It is better to be great in a little thing, than little in a great thing," and has triumphantly acted up to the axiom.

A few days after the appearance and disappearance of Mr. Barrett, the long talked-of opera by Mr. John Barnett, entitled *Fair Rosamond*, was produced, though its production was at first in danger of being frustrated. The misunderstanding that had sprung up between the Lord Chamberlain's office and Drury Lane was considered to be amicably adjusted by the receipt of Mr. Martins' letter of the 31st December, already given; but in consequence of two farces (*The Yankee Pedlar* and *Hush*) having been produced during the period of the misunderstanding, without the Lord Chamberlain's license, and without (of far more importance to the groundlings of his office than all the licenses which he ever signed) the payment of the fees, an intimation was sent to the theatre by the officials, that no farther licenses would be granted to Drury Lane Theatre until the regulations of his Lordship's office were complied with. My first impression was to hurl at them all the gauntlet of defiance, strictly following the Act of Parliament (10 Geo. II. chapter 28,) which, while it renders it imperative on the ma-

nager to submit his new pieces to the Lord Chamberlain fourteen days before their production, does not call upon the Lord Chamberlain to issue any license for the performance; it arms him with an authority to prohibit, but does not require him to sanction. The "license" part of the business has been got up by the feelers of fees, and they have taken custom for right. Reader, as the gentle *Portia* says,

"Thyself shall see the act,"

or at least as much of it as is necessary for the argument we have entered upon:

"And be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, That from and after the said twenty-fourth day of June, 1737, it shall and may be lawful to and for the said Lord Chamberlain for the time being, from time to time, and when and as often as he shall think fit, to prohibit the acting, performing, or representing any interlude, tragedy, comedy, opera, play, farce, or other entertainment of the stage, or any act, scene, or part thereof, or any prologue or epilogue; and in case any person or persons shall for hire, gain, or reward, act, perform, or represent, or cause to be acted, performed, or represented, any new interlude, tragedy, comedy, opera, play, farce, or other entertainment of the stage, or any act, scene, or part thereof, or any new prologue or epilogue, before a copy thereof shall be sent as aforesaid, with such account as aforesaid; or shall, for hire, gain, or reward, act, perform, or represent, or cause to be acted, performed, or represented, any interlude, tragedy, comedy, opera, play, farce, or other entertainment of the stage, or any act, scene, or part thereof, or any prologue or epilogue, contrary to such prohibition as aforesaid; every person so offending shall, for every such offence, forfeit the sum of fifty pounds, and every grant, license, and authority (in case there be any such) by or under which the said master or masters, or manager or managers, set up, formed or continued such playhouse, or such company of actors, shall cease, determine, and become absolutely void, to all intents and purposes whatsoever."

It is upon this Act that the powers of the Lord Chamberlain are used, and in my opinion too often misused. Having sent the opera of *Fair Rosamond* to his Lordship, it would have been assuredly acted, without any reference to the intimation received, had not the committee of Drury Lane Theatre recommended the payment of the trumpery fee; which recommenda-

tion was accordingly attended to. This intimation did not, very prudently, say that the Lord Chamberlain *prohibited* the performance of *Fair Rosamond*, but only that he would not issue a license. There is a vast difference herein; because, as already observed, while the Act of Parliament gives the power to prohibit, neither that Act, nor Killigrew's patent, requires that any piece should be licensed.

The success that attended the introduction of *Fair Rosamond* induced me to try an experiment which was attempted by Charles Kemble in January, 1832—viz. to advertise an entertainment for performances on nights when the theatres had hitherto been closed. It came forth on Tuesday, February 28th, and was announced for repetition on the *Thursday* and *FRIDAY* following. On the evening of Thursday, his lordship's prohibition (contained in the subjoined petition to Parliament) was received, and the performance on the said Friday was consequently abandoned.

Mr. Kemble, in his examination upon this point before the select committee of the House of Commons, says, "I think it doubtful if the power of the Lord Chamberlain could have prevented my acting on any of those nights, if I had so pleased." But it is evident by such statement that he had not studied the 10th *George II. chapter 28*, as closely as I have had occasion to study it. I sent the following petition to Parliament, presented and followed up by that spirited member, and noble-minded man, Mr. Duncombe; but, despite his advocacy, I might just as well have left it alone.

"PETITION OF ALFRED BUNN, LESSEE OF THE THEATRE  
ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

"The humble Petition of Alfred Bunn, of the Theatre Royal,  
"Drury Lane,—

"SHEWETH,

"That the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane was built and opened under the sanction, and by virtue of the powers, contained in a certain Act of Parliament, passed in the fiftieth year of the reign of his late Majesty King George the Third, entitled, 'An Act for rebuilding the late Theatre Royal Drury Lane upon the conditions and under the regulations therein mentioned' and, which Act expressly directed the purchase of a certain patent, granted by King Charles the Second to Thomas Killigrew, for theatrical and other performances; and for the purchase of which, under such high sanction and direction, a vast sum of money was paid, which had been subscribed upon the faith of the said Act of Parliament, and other Acts subsequently passed by your honourable House.



"That your petitioner is the lessee of the said theatre with the use and benefit of the said royal patent attached to it.

"That your petitioner entered into the contract for renting the theatre with the firmest reliance that he was to have the full benefit of all the rights and privileges of such royal patent, and he has expended very large sums of money in embellishing and decorating the said theatre, and rendering it at once commodious for the public, and creditable as a national theatre.

"That your petitioner, in order to afford the exhibition of talent and novelty, did on Tuesday, the twenty-eighth day of February last, at a great expense, produce an opera called 'Fair Rosamond,' a fine musical composition, and as splendid a performance as any ever brought out on the English stage; and that the said opera having been first submitted to the perusal of the 'Examiner of all theatrical entertainments,' had been duly licensed by the Lord Chamberlain of his Majesty's household, as 'not containing anything immoral or otherwise improper for the stage; for which license your petitioner paid the sum demanded by the officer of the Lord Chamberlain.

"That the said opera having been received by the public with the greatest enthusiasm, your petitioner did, on Wednesday, the first day of March instant, advertise the performance of it for the following Friday evening.

"That at the late hour of seven o'clock on the evening of Thursday, the second instant, a letter, of which the following is a copy, addressed to the 'Secretary to the Committee of the Theatre Drury Lane,' was delivered at that theatre some hours after the said secretary had gone from his office, viz.

"Lord Chamberlain's Office, March 22nd, 1837.

"Immediate.

"SIR,\*

"It having been publicly announced that the performance

\* The subjoined letter was sent to the Lord Chamberlain, with reference to the interdiction that had arrived from his office :

"Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,

"March 4, 1837.

"My Lord,

"It is a duty I owe to your lordship, as well as to myself, to state that my announcement of a performance to take place at this theatre, yesterday, March 3d, without any previous communication with your lordship, was never contemplated with the remotest idea of offering the slightest possible disrespect; but originated entirely in my having perceived that other theatres in your lordship's jurisdiction had been playing a variety of ribald entertainments on the Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent, without interruption, which led to my consequent belief that the rigidity of the system hitherto observed had been abandoned.

"I avail myself of this opportunity of stating to your lordship that I

of *Fair Rosamond* is to take place at Drury Lane Theatre to-morrow, and as no other than sacred entertainments have hitherto been allowed at that theatre on the Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent, I am commanded by the Lord Chamberlain to refer you to a communication addressed to you from this department on the 18th of February, 1833, and to acquaint you, for the information of the committee of the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, that his lordship forbids the opening of the house according to the announcement above alluded to; and the Lord Chamberlain trusts that this communication will supersede the necessity of taking any other steps to enforce the due observance of the season of Lent at Drury Lane Theatre, as heretofore.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

" WILLIAM MARTINS.

"To William Dunn, Esq. Secretary to the committee of Theatre Royal, Drury Lane."

"That it was entirely by accident the contents of the above letter came to the knowledge of your petitioner, no direct communication having been made to him from the Lord Chamberlain's office. In consequence, however, of such prohibition, your petitioner, even at that late hour, took immediate measures for complying with his lordship's mandate, by closing Drury Lane Theatre on the following evening; a step which has occasioned a serious loss to your petitioner, as well as to the author and composer of the said opera, the performers, and various persons employed in and about the said theatre, and the numerous families entirely dependent for their support on your petitioner's theatre being kept open, and who, it must be remembered, are not paid when the theatre is closed.

"That your petitioner humbly submits to your honourable House, that this theatre, together with those of the Adelphi, the Strand, and the St. James's Theatre, are within the understood jurisdiction of the Lord Chamberlain for the time being, and that the three latter theatres have no power to open their

have received, in my capacity of lessee of this theatre, the most marked indignity from the servants in your lordship's office, by their addressing communications, affecting the management of it, to other persons than the manager, the last instance of which, referring to the announced performance of Friday last, only came by the merest accident to my knowledge, and might have been the cause of my disobeying your lordship's mandate. I beg to assure you that I am incapable of entertaining any other feeling than one of the highest respect for your lordship, and of gratitude for the individual courtesy I have always received at your lordship's hands.

"I have the honour to be, my lord,

"Your lordship's very obedient servant,

" A. BUNN.

"To the Right Hon. the Lord Chamberlain, &c. &c."

doors but by the express permission of his lordship ; and yet on the very evenings in question, when your petitioner was prohibited from performing at Drury Lane Theatre any 'other than sacred entertainments,' these other theatres were permitted to give a variety of entertainments of a mixed and ribald character.

" The Adelphi Theatre has been opened 'on the Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent,' with the performance of an actress in 'the delineation of the Passions,' with comic singing by the other persons' one of whom is the singer of the song called 'Jim Crow,' and other negro melodies, and the performances of the Bedouin Arabs, with scenic displays, and a monologue.

" The St. James's Theatre opened on the evening of Friday, the third instant, with 'comic singing,' and 'imitations of the London actors,' with a pantomimic piece called 'The Adventures of a Night,' and other miscellaneous singing.

" The Strand Theatre opened on the same evening with a performance called 'A Wallet of Whims and Waggeries,' with musical performances by the English Paganini, gymnastic exercises by an Indian juggler, and a variety of dancing and scenic views.

" That your petitioner, with great humility, submits to the consideration of your honourable House, that all these entertainments are in direct violation of the restriction which has been placed on Drury Lane Theatre.

" That in all those theatres, which are either in or out of London, and not in the jurisdiction of the Lord Chamberlain, every description of stage entertainment is nightly played throughout the whole period of Lent.

" That the Church of St. Paul Covent Garden, in which parish Drury Lane Theatre is situate, is not open on the evenings of the Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent; and that all clubs, balls, concerts, public dinners, and amusements, are open and given on these, the same as any other evenings in the year.

" Your petitioner therefore humbly, yet earnestly prays, that your honourable House will take into consideration the circumstances of the case, and interfere in order to save him and the numerous other persons who are so deeply interested in keeping open an establishment of such a magnitude, from the great loss which will otherwise be sustained by the partial exercise of an authority so extensive and powerful as that which has led to Drury Lane Theatre being closed; and that this theatre, enjoying a royal patent, and erected under an Act of Parliament, may not be deprived of privileges which are extended to minor theatres which have no patent whatever, and which therefore must, it is humbly submitted, have received from the Lord Chamber-

lain an authority his lordship has thought proper to withhold from your petitioner.

"And your petitioner will ever pray," &c.

Mr. Duncombe, who had kindly taken upon himself the task of carrying the business through the House of Commons as far as possible, had several conferences with the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Spring Rice) upon the subject, at the last of which he undertook to forward him the opinion delivered upon the subject by Sir James Scarlett in 1833, in consequence of a similar attempt that year on the part of Captain Polhill to open Drury Lane on a hitherto prohibited night having been frustrated by the Lord Chamberlain.\* As valuable theatrical documents, I insert Mr. Duncombe's letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the reply of that learned functionary, which put an end to the matter for the time:

"The Albany Court Yard,  
"March 11, 1837.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"According to your request, I enclose you Sir James Scarlett's opinion, given in 1833, with a copy of the petition. The Killigrew patent and the twenty-one years' license granted to Messrs. Whitbread and Co. in 1816, are to be found in the Appendix to the Dramatic Literature Committee's report, made in 1832, pp. 239 and 240. The only Act of Parliament that at all bears upon this subject is the 10 Geo. II. c. 28, whereby a copy of every dramatic entertainment is required to be sent to the Lord Chamberlain fourteen days prior to its representation, under a penalty of £50 or a forfeiture of the license or patent, and there is no other act whatever specifying the days upon which performances are to take place. You were quite right when you stated that it had been long the custom for theatres to close on Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent, but this custom has

\* The following was Sir James's opinion: "I find nothing in the patents to restrain the authority of the patentees upon the subject, nor am I aware of any Act of Parliament that relates to it. The usage has been very long, and it is possible that some general words may be found in some Acts of Parliament for the observance of these days, which may support the usage; but unless the statute is suggested to me, I have not time, within the period when this case is required, to look for it.

"J. SCARLETT."

"Temple, 19th Feb. 1833.

The 10 Geo. II. cap. 28, would have put Sir James right; but he exemplified in this instance, as he did in a trial of mine, a remarkable fact, that from a good pleader a man may become "*a bad judge*."

within the last few years ceased to exist as regards the minor theatres within the Lord Chamberlain's jurisdiction, and has only continued to be observed by Drury Lane, on account of its having heretofore suited the lessee's convenience to remain closed upon those evenings. I believe I am only expressing the wish of the gentlemen connected with the patent theatres, as well as of the public at large, when I say that they do not desire that theatres should be open on the following days, viz. *Ash Wednesday, the whole of Passion Week, Christmas Eve,* and of course Christmas-day. But when we know what is going on in every portion of this metropolis upon the days now in dispute, *all parties* consider the restriction attempted to be placed upon Drury Lane Theatre as a gross piece of humbug, and, as I contend, a stretch of power on the part of the Lord Chamberlain's department unsanctioned by law. Permit me also to observe, that on last Ash Wednesday, a day on which I propose that all theatres should be closed, the Brighton theatre, which is licensed by and under exactly the same jurisdiction, viz. the Lord Chamberlain, as the theatres in the city of Westminster, the Court at the time residing at the Pavilion, played *Charles XII., The Maid of Switzerland,* and *The Vampire*. If I might, therefore, be allowed to suggest what I think would be the best course at present to be pursued, looking at the defective state of the law, and taking into consideration what has already passed, it would be this, that in the event of Drury Lane being opened on Friday next, which in all probability it will, that no one should give themselves farther concern about it, and the subject be allowed to drop. I will not, therefore, trouble you farther upon the subject, unless Lord John Russell or yourself should wish for farther information, in which case, if either you or he will communicate your wishes, they shall be immediately attended to by,

" My dear Sir,

" Yours very faithfully,

" THOMAS S. DUNCOMBE.

" To the Right Hon. T. Spring Rice."

" March 12, 1837.

" MY DEAR SIR,

" I showed your letter, together with the case and opinion enclosed, to Lord John Russell, and to other members of the Government, and it was their opinion, that if the parties interested in Drury Lane Theatre were to perform on Wednesday or Friday, they would expose themselves to all the penal consequences of persons *playing without a license*. How far this

might affect them, or even their patent, I do not venture to inquire.

"I return the case and opinion.

"Yours very truly,

"My dear Sir,

"T. SPRING RICE.

"T. S. Duncombe, M.P."

Has any man a propensity for witnessing an execution? Kean sat up all night in a room opposite the Debtor's Door of the Old Baily, to catch a full view of the deaths of the Cato Street conspirators; and as he was going on the stage in the evening, he said to me, "I mean to die like Thistlewood to-night; I'll imitate every muscle of that man's countenance." There is much general knowledge to be gathered, much useful reflection to arise, from scenes of this painful solemnity; and, as Mrs. Malaprop says, "I own the soft impeachment" of having some years back had a hankering after such exhibitions. Excitement and contemplation are alike aroused thereby; if a man's disposition be good, it will be confirmed—and if evil, it will be chastened and ameliorated by these lessons of pains and penalties. For an *artiste*, an execution is quite an important event, as affording him the means of study not every day within his reach.

I went to hear the condemned sermon, this year, delivered before Greenacre, the murderer, in the CHAPEL OF NEWGATE. The man's appearance and deportment furnished room for deep thought and close and minute investigation, standing as he did on the threshold of eternity, with all the conflicting emotions of humanity visible in his countenance. I am sorry to confess that my attention was more rivetted on the looks of that man, to trace any change which might come over them, as the words of the sixth commandment fell upon his ear, than it was on that solemn part of the decalogue. I have now before mine eye the movement of every visiter in the chapel, as those awful words, "Thou shalt do no murder," fell upon the ears of him who had infringed on the sacred mandate. Imagine the words "Thou shalt do no murder" ringing in the ears of a MURDERER! I have now ringing in *mine* something almost as appalling—the shriek of the supposed participator in his crime, Mrs. Gale, who, from the convict's gallery, heard her guilty paramour vindicate her character, and to the truth of his assertion invoke the POWER before whom his incarnadined soul had in a few hours to appear. I must inflict on the reader some thoughts strung together at the time—wishy-washy stuff, to be sure, but the whole

thing haunted me—and one's dullness wants a little relief, even if it be at the risk of becoming *more* dull:

*Lines written in the Chapel of Newgate, previous to the Condemned Sermon, on*

JAMES GREENACRE,

WHO WAS HUNG THE FOLLOWING DAY FOR THE MURDER OF H. BROWNE.

A thousand gazing eyes are there,  
And a thousand anxious breasts :  
And many a knee, in pretence of prayer,  
On the sacred threshold rests.

But it is not to worship the mighty God,  
To pour out a contrite heart,  
To bow to the throne, and to kiss the rod,  
For the sins in the soul that smart.

'Tis to look on the man of shame and crime,  
From the law of his God who hath swerved,  
To see, as he stands on the verge of time,  
If his spirit be yet unnerved;

To watch, with a pause of suspended breath  
In scenes which the firmest sink,  
If that daring which led to another's death,  
From the thoughts of his own would shrink :

To list to the song of repentance, heard  
From the inmates of sorrow's cell,  
While deep on the culprit's ear each word  
Of the sixth commandment fell :

In some feature of that ensanguined face,  
Impressed by the stain of sin,  
With searching eye to attempt to trace  
The conflict of thought within !

'Tis idle all—in the boundless scope  
Of his Maker's lasting love,  
Though spared not here, there is yet a hope  
His soul may be saved above !

Sunday, April 30, 1837.

Has any man a propensity for managing a French company? for, after the present dissertation upon hanging, I know nothing else so nearly allied to a state of suspension. Dangling in the air is no doubt bad enough, but dangling after the heels of a French actress is very little better. Their professional expectations being chiefly based upon gallantry, their lives are passed in a routine of demands and concessions. The names of Cartou, Gaussin, Arnould, Fel, Defresne, and a long list of others,

might be added to one equally long of modern date, and brought to bear in testimony of my assertion. If not already launched into her full career, the little butterfly is guarded by a mother or a duenna, superintending the development of her charms; if it hath been winged, it is ushered in by some guardian angel of the masculine gender, and with these respective dragons of the *Hesperides* has the director of a French theatre to contend. The contest with the beauties themselves is quite formidable enough; for the exaction of so much courtesy, which their exaction of so many professional privileges renders it difficult to pay, neutralizes every effort to preserve harmony. If a French actress be allotted a character she does not like, or if the one she *does* like be given to another, the manager is waited upon by some noble admirer, to point out the injustice inflicted upon the object of his admiration, who generally ends his complaint, in case of its being redressed, with a promise to support the theatre—which promise he makes a point of breaking. If the fair actress be given a dress which, in the eyes of her worshipper, does not set off the charms he worships to the fullest advantage, the manager stands a chance of having a bullet lodged in his thigh, or a small sword run through his thorax. If the lady, from not possessing the talent she imagines, or even if she does possess it, from not being as amenable as might be wished, be “shelved,” the manager is either favoured with a visit from some proprietor of, or writer in, a journal, or with the perusal of some article in the same, pointing out the loss the public sustains by the non-employment of so fascinating a performer, of whose talents, but for such paragraph, the public would never have heard at all. It is impossible almost for a Frenchman, certainly for an Englishman, to be a match for a French actress, who is a perfect mistress of *coquetterie*, and has had the principles of *finesse* instilled into her mind from the earliest dawn of comprehension. The most perfect managerial adept I ever met is my friend *Monsieur Véron*, who, at the time he was directeur of the *Académie Royale de Musique* at Paris, visited this country for the purpose of engaging *Les Demoiselles Elssler*. He gave them a splendid dinner at the Clarendon, and when the dessert was put upon the table, the centre piece was a large salver of *bijouterie* for each of them to select one trinket from, of a given value, in addition to the theatrical engagement he offered them. It was not only an elegant but a very politic mode of arranging business; for while they would have otherwise been disputing half the time upon a question of a few hundred francs, a bauble, of not half the value decided it at once. I shall not easily forget Véron’s astonishment at the bill for this dinner; not at its general amount, which, considering the



splendour of the "spread" for sixteen of us was very reasonable, (being under 40*l.*) but at an item of 8*l.* 8*s.* for soup! He could not understand that the usual extraordinary charge of half a guinea a head, when turtle is put on the table, was any thing short of imposition, averring with an ambiguous smile, that 8*l.* 8*s.* would nearly purchase all the soup in Paris.

But Véron knew his people; for many things may be done with a foreign actress, if you commence operations with a dinner and end them with a diamond.\* In these general remarks, however, not the slightest impolite allusion to *Mademoiselle Elssler* or her sister is intended, for I have invariably found her tractable and obliging; but in the main, these performers are unmanageable. They will frequently be more than an hour behind their time at rehearsal, a great rudeness in itself, but they will be still more rude if they find the rehearsal has proceeded without them, or has been dismissed in consequence of their absence. The progress of business is frequently retarded while that morning companion of the dressing-room, a basin of bouillon, is undergoing demolition; and is as frequently interrupted by the intrusion of admiring visitors *dans les coulisses*. In short I have long since arrived at the conclusion that they are altogether ungovernable; for what with the demands for payments and perquisites, billets and boxes, dresses and dressing rooms, beaux and their bullyings, impudence and intrigue, and all the consequences of non-compliance, a manager's life is harassed without achievement, while they have their way at last; verifying the ancient couplet,

"For what they will, they will—you may depend on't,  
And what they won't, they won't—and there's and end on't."

\* VÉRON seemed also to have studied *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

"Dumb jewels often, in their silent kind,  
More than quick words, do move a woman's mind!"

Act iii. scene 1.

## CHAPTER III.

Patent delights!—the regular and the irregular drama—Their advantages discussed—Madame Pasta, the Lord Chamberlain, and his late Majesty—Some doubt where Drury Lane is—Sir Herbert Taylor and the Baron Ompteda—Lord Foley and his Gentlemen-at-Arms—London and Windsor duties—Fulfilment of the latter put in practice—Expensive soliciting—Lying in state, and stato lying—Shakspeare's definition of honour—Duke of Beaufort and Mademoiselle Taglioni—Effect of royal deaths on royal theatres—Madame Schroeder Devrient—Bad French and bad conduct—High and low exchequers.

**THE Patents!** If the parties who are at this moment arguing so strongly the injustice of their existence, and the absolute necessity of their abrogation, were but in the exercise of the privilege supposed to belong to them, they would have a hearty laugh at themselves for the unnecessary pains they are taking. They are literally worthless to their possessors, and harmless to those they are supposed to injure. **THE PATENTS** (pretty dears!) are supposed to give their holders a monopoly over the drama, whereby they may act any entertainment of the stage they think proper, and limit other theatres to particular performances. Reverse the case, and you will be much nearer the mark. The sticklers for the erasure of these patents from the statute-book contend that, notwithstanding the inroad on their privileges, and the consequent invasion of the law with impunity, by so many London theatres, as long as that law **MIGHT** be enforced there is no safety for the drama. This I take to be the extent of their discussion. There is not a vast deal of difference, in these days, whether a man, and above all men, a manager, exercise the prerogative of another in defiance of the law, or exercise his own, backed by the law—he stands very little chance of being disturbed in his avocation. But supposing that the antagonists of these unfortunate documents had their own way, and the trade in the drama was declared to be free as that of any more necessary commodity, the opinions they entertain of that freedom leading to the regeneration of the stage, are, to my way of thinking, erroneous in the extreme. I cannot think that any writer or disputant on the subject actually believes that if this “monopoly” as it is called, were removed, and its advantages extended over the town, a capitalist could be found to disburse one shilling towards the erection of a theatre **FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF THE REGULAR DRAMA**; nor can I think that any one theatre in

existence would avail itself of the extension by resorting to that class of entertainment. In the very best days of the patent theatres, since they were rebuilt, except under temporary excitement, the performance of the regular drama has never been able to sustain the burdens of the treasury. Mr. Kemble and Mrs. Siddons, until the period of their retirement arrived, played to miserable houses at Covent Garden Theatre, and recourse was had to **BLUE BEARD**, and other equestrian entertainments, to back up the want of attraction in Shakspeare's best plays, personated by our best performers. Mr. Kean, at the outburst of his fame, brought a stream of gold into the exchequer, but for many subsequent years played before as scanty audiences as could reasonably be expected to assemble in any place of public entertainment. Mr. C. Kean played at one part of the season, 1837-38, to some of the greatest houses (adopting theatrical phraseology) ever known; but on his return, about six weeks after his first engagement, for the fulfilment of his second engagement, the benches of the theatre were comparatively deserted. Miss O'Neil's attraction was very great at first, but as soon as the novelty even of feminine beauty had passed away, the charm was dispelled, and I have frequently seen that gifted actress in a new tragedy, supported by Messrs. Young, C. Kemble, and Macready, playing under the expenses of the evening. Mr. C. Kemble never attracted one shilling in any character he ever played, until the people were told he was about to retire; and then the very people who had for a series of years judiciously asserted that his talent was unequal to an adequate representation of *Hamlet* and other leading characters, flocked to see him enact the parts which they knew in their hearts he could NOT enact. Mr. Macready never *has* brought, and never *will* bring, in my opinion, except under particular circumstances, a farthing more than any ordinary actor—perhaps not so much, when all the exertions put into force to make him **APPEAR** attractive, are taken into consideration. Is there then any prospect of better performers arising than those this moment enumerated? Can the extension of the drama, if carried to the length of the China wall, be the means of producing better? Those who think so, will find that a legal extension of the means now limited to the patent theatres, instead of encouraging the culture of dramatic talent, will only lead to the encouragement of more outrageous demands by a few individuals, than they even now have the assurance to ask. The only one vital objection that has ever occurred to me against the extension of patent privileges, or performances by violation of them, is the abstraction of particular performers, by the bait of a high salary, from the fountain-head. The advantage

of being solely enabled to perform the regular drama is laughable; for if a lessee of Covent Garden or Drury Lane were condemned to act nothing else, he would run away from either theatre rather than manage it. If there is any virtue in the patents of these buildings, it is only to be found in the supposed power of representing ANY entertainment which the holders of them think proper—that power taken away, and “there is no more faith in them than in a stewed prune.” If the “monopoly” were to cease to-morrow, not one more actor of note, nor one more theatre for the display of his talent, would rise up. The theatres in this country, like every other establishment unprotected by civil grant, being matters of speculation, must be conducted in the long-run upon the principles which regulate speculators in general; and only when such speculators shall find the tendency of the public taste likely to pay them for the performance of the regular drama, will they ever attempt it. A little practice is more useful than all the theory ever contemplated; and practice has proved that the performance of the regular drama at the minor houses has answered no other purpose than that of weaning away particular performers from the larger theatres, to give them a higher salary and a false reputation; and that of compelling the manager of the larger theatres to introduce on their boards the trumpery talent of the smaller establishments. This has *degenerated* rather than *regenerated* the drama. Would Madame Vestris have given Mr. Farren £60 a week at the Olympic Theatre, if she had been compelled to exhibit him in any part in Shakspeare’s comedies, or in the humbler characters of the regular drama by which he established his reputation at the winter theatres? Would my worthy friend Webster give Power £20 a night, if he were obliged to play him in *Sir Lucius O’Trigger*, *Major O’Flaherty*, and other portions of the said regular drama? Or what is still stronger, would he engage Mr. Macready at the imprudent salary that mime demands, and play him in this “regular drama,” unless he could secure Power to back his performances by making the people roar in the *irregular* drama? This is practice,—not mere preaching. Write away, gentlemen; but go and ask Mr. Webster who *has* the legal right, and Messrs. Yates, Davidge, Butler, Braham, and others, who have *not* the legal right, to exhibit on the boards of their theatres **THE REGULAR DRAMA**, whether any consideration on earth would induce them to act in mere fartherance of the art, and in the belief that, by so doing, the art would be supported; and I’ll submit to have the hand that is penning these remarks chopped off to the wrist if they say **YES!** They would occasionally act it by virtue of the law,

as they would now without such virtue, if any extraneous circumstance arose to hold out to them a prospect of profit; but give them fifty patents apiece, and they would not avail themselves of their patent rights one jot the more without such prospect. If the existence of the patents of Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatres were any actual infringement on the amusements of the people, the people would cry out fast enough for their abolition; nor would the matter end merely in the "cry"—the abolition would be carried: but the people are not sufficiently dramatic for that, and therein lies all the secret, if the controversy were to continue until doomsday. If the public *animus* HAD been dramatic, the complaints that have arisen amongst a select few against the constitution of these theatres would long since have become general, if the cause for them had been just; but as the errors complained of, are, for the most part, of public and not individual creation, no solid ground exists for entertaining them. The law which has been called into existence since the grant of these patents, and which to a certain extent nullifies the grant altogether, is a far greater piece of humbug, and a more glaring monopoly, than all the patents that ever were given. If, as "the learned in the law" of the land have laid down, the power be vested in the crown of granting, extending, or revoking all patents and licenses to theatres, the subsequent vesting of any such power in the hands of a Lord Chamberlain is a clear case of quackery. Killigrew's patent, under which Drury Lane Theatre opens, granted by Charles II., and recognised in sundry Acts of Parliament down to George III., is still at the mercy of the Lord Chamberlain by the 10th of George II. cap. 28, who *may* prohibit, and *has* prohibited, performances which the patents themselves give their possessors the power of representing. We had better, therefore, have a laugh, and then proceed to an exemplification of our assertions, in addition to instances already quoted.

I entered at this time into an engagement with Madame Pasta, involving no less a sum than £1000, for a few nights' performance. The freshness, beauty, youth, and talent of Mademoiselle Grisi had raised her into the situation of monopolizer of the opera stage, and the stupendous genius of Pasta would have been lost to this country, but for the supposed PATENT RIGHTS of Drury Lane Theatre, whereby foreign performances of all descriptions had been so repeatedly given. In a full reliance on the "powers" in my possession, on the strength of which I had before introduced Italian operas, and the Italian opera company, I announced Madame Pasta for her celebrated character of *Romeo*, in Zingarelli's opera of *Romeo e Giulietta*, and engaged Madame Gianoni to enact the gentle *Juliet*. The

Vice-Chamberlain, acting under the guidance of the Lord Chamberlain, (the Marquis Conyngham, toasted by his Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex as the protector of the large theatres,) prohibited the performance,\* and thus deprived the English public of a treat they will never witness again.

It was contended that the performance of an Italian entertainment at an English theatre would be unjust to the manager of the Opera House, and calculated to do him a serious injury. A pack of nonsense! The frequenters of the Opera House affect not to know that any other theatre is in existence! Mr. Charles Kean told me, that a noble patroness of his met him at a *soirée*, and that the following dialogue passed between them:

*My Lady*.—Ah, my dear Mr. Kean, how do you do? How long have you been in town?

*Mr. Kean*.—About three weeks!

*My Lady*.—Well, and shall we see you act?

*Mr. Kean*.—I *am* acting.

*My Lady*.—Where pray? we must go.

*Mr. Kean*.—At Drury Lane.

*My Lady*.—(with an extra quantity of hawhawing) Where *is* Drury Lane?

It was farther contended, that under the opera arrangement of 1792, no Italian operas were to be given at Drury Lane or Covent Garden Theatres. That is perfectly true; but by the said arrangement, the Opera House was never to be opened but on a Tuesday and on a Saturday, and then only with an Italian opera; and its season was to be limited to sixty nights. Now what has the Lord Chamberlain granted to *that* theatre? Week after week the Opera House has been opened six successive nights, and its concert rooms six successive mornings; and in addition

\* The subjoined is a copy of the official document despatched by order of Lord Charles Fitzroy, then the Vice-Chamberlain, under guidance of the Lord Chamberlain, who was out of town for a day or two:

“ Lord Chamberlain’s office,  
“ May 11, 1837.

“ Immediate,

“ Sir,

“ It being announced that an Italian entertainment of the stage is to take place at Drury Lane Theatre, I am directed by the Vice-Chamberlain, acting in the absence of the Lord Chamberlain, to inform you that his lordship is commanded to prohibit any other than English entertainments of the stage at this theatre, and therefore no Italian performances of any kind will be sanctioned there.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Your obedient servant,  
“ WILLIAM MARTINS.”

“ A Bunn, Esq.,

“ Theatre Royal Drury Lane.”

to Italian Operas, we have seen on its stage German Operas, French operas, French plays, concerts, and, on particular occasions, English performances.\* The arrangement of 1792 had

\* This subject was taken up warmly by the press; but I have not room for more than one excellent view of the subject, from the pen, I understood at the time, of one of the Drury Lane renters, a gentleman of great note and extensive information.

*"To the Editor of the Morning Chronicle.*

"Sir,—The performance of Zingarelli's Italian Opera of *Romeo e Giulietta* was announced for the purpose of introducing on the English stage, at a moderate price, the eminent talent of Madame Pasta, and the representation being prohibited by an order from the Lord Chamberlain's office, I have been at some pains to ascertain the grounds upon which the announcement in question was issued.

"The lessee of this theatre is assignee for the term of his lease of the royal patent under which it is nightly open; and without unnecessarily occupying attention by a recital of its more minute contents, the following extract will furnish ample justification of the arrangements entered upon by him.

"We do hereby for us, our heirs and successors, grant full power, license, and authority from time to time, to act plays and entertainments of the stage of all sorts, peaceably and quietly, without the impeachment or impediment of any person or persons whatsoever, for the honest recreation of such as shall desire to see the same."

"It is herein manifest beyond dispute, that Drury Lane Theatre is empowered to play all entertainments of the stage, without exception; and in evidence of such power, it is only necessary to recall to public attention, that on repeated occasions, performances of the most varied character have been introduced on its boards, and every foreign artiste of distinction has appeared in them. Amongst others, the entire opera of *La Gazza Ladra* has been enacted by the present united talent of the Opera House, and French vaudevilles, German operas, acts and scenes from several Italian operas, have likewise been represented, peaceably and quietly, without the impeachment or impediment of any person or persons whatsoever.

"I have been informed, that in August 1792, an arrangement was entered into between the representatives of Drury Lane, Covent Garden, and the Opera House, by which the two former bound themselves not to enact any Italian performances, and the latter to enact nothing else. That arrangement was in no respect binding on the present lessee, it having been long since set aside; inasmuch as for some years past the Opera House season has consisted of performances of the most general and diversified character, there having been given on that stage Italian operas, French operas, German operas, French Dramas, English dramas, concerts, &c. &c.

"It was also an understanding in the arrangement in question, that the nights of performance at the Opera House should be confined to Tuesdays and Saturdays. How this stipulation has been acted upon requires no comment.

"The Opera arrangement, moreover, never contemplated that new minor theatres should be established in Westminster, or that the licenses of those in existence at the time should be extended as they recently

been long since broken in upon, and especially so by the Opera House itself; an example that had been followed with impunity by both the patent theatres. This assumption, therefore, of the Lord Chamberlain was unjust.

It was first thought that a firm but respectful representation of the facts to his late Majesty would lead to a removal of the prohibition; but subsequently I accompanied a noble lord, interested in the affairs of Drury Lane Theatre, to Windsor, under the impression that his lordship's intimacy with Sir Herbert Taylor, would, at all events, lead to an opportunity of fully explaining the circumstances. As we entered the quadrangle, his Majesty, who was in conference with Sir Herbert and the Baron Ompteda at a window, recognized the noble lord, and guessed the nature of his lordship's business, as will appear. The noble peer might have claimed an audience, but, with the recollection of that demanded by Lord Oxford of George IV. his lordship sent a few lines up to Sir Herbert Taylor, asking when he could have the pleasure of saying a few words to him. Shortly afterwards one of the pages came down, and thus delivered himself: "Sir Herbert's compliments, and he regrets extremely that he is so engaged to-day, as to be unable to see your lordship; and his Majesty commands me to say, that if it is about the theatres, your lordship must go to the Lord Chamberlain!" Exeunt the patrician and the plebian with a flea in their ears!

A respectful memorial, pointing out all the circumstances herein adduced, the heavy loss which the prohibition would en-

have been; by which extension, and the illegal performance of pieces belonging to the patent theatres, the talent of most of the leading performers of the day has been withdrawn from its proper sphere of action by temporary temptation, and the general interests of the patent property virtually affected. In addition to these innovations, an Italian opera was licensed throughout the last winter. It does, therefore, seem somewhat paradoxical, that at the very time the Lord Chamberlain has chosen to exercise his authority in extending additional advantages to places having no claim to them, (and which presumed advantages have terminated only in disaster,) he should likewise direct it to the abridgment of vested rights enjoyed by patents, on the faith of which nearly a million of money has been advanced by the public to erect and put into action the theatres which possess them.

"The exertions of the most industrious may be paralyzed by oppression, and whether Drury Lane Theatre will be able to withstand the attempts incessantly made to pull it down from the eminence in which public favour has placed it, remains to be proved; but there can be only one opinion on the interference of the Lord Chamberlain's office on the question at issue.

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient Servant,

"A SHAREHOLDER,

("Who has never received a Dividend for Twenty-five Years.")



tail, the fact of its being a performance only of ten nights' duration, and other strong points, was forwarded, to his Majesty, who, however, was pleased to continue obdurate, and Madame Pasta was unable to appear on the London stage. The political position of affairs had left his Majesty little more than two branches of his immediate prerogative, over which his ministers did not exercise some sort of control, and in both of these I was mixed up—the patent theatres, and the honourable corps of gentlemen at arms. A day or two after my return from Windsor, I was sent for by Lord Foley, who commands this honourable corps, and was apprized by him that his Majesty informed him, at the last levée, that “if Mr. Bunn attempted to interfere with his Majesty's prerogative in regard to the patent theatres, he should be under the necessity of requiring him to leave the corps of gentlemen at arms.” Lord Foley knew, admitted, and stated, that the one matter had nothing whatever to do with the other, and was pleased to speak in flattering terms of my conduct as one of his corps. But the urbane observations of his lordship (and a more excellent young nobleman is not in existence) were of no use. If I contended for what I imagined to be my patent rights, I must leave the court; and if I did not contend for them, I must lose my money by forfeiting Madame Pasta's engagement. If my rights *had* been what I once *supposed* them to be, and if there had been no Act of Parliament more powerful than a King's patent, I would have left it to the people to determine whether they were willing that *their* pleasure should be at the pleasure of the Lord Chamberlain, and would have made my last bow at St. James's. But I had no alternative but to prove, by submission, that “the king's name is a tower of strength,” and to retire from the contest.

This prohibition of the Lord Chamberlain led to the introduction of a bill into the House of Commons, by Mr. Duncombe and Sir Benjamin Hall, for the amendment of the Act, (10 Geo. II. cap. 28,) the “soliciting” which cost me about £150. It was sent up to the House of Lords, where it was very roughly handled by the Marquis of Salisbury, probably more out of an electioneering feeling to the late opponent of his interest at Hertford, than for any particular interest about the bill itself; but it was still more severely cauterised by the brand of the Bishop of London, who stated that he had received his Majesty's directions to watch the progress of the bill with the utmost caution. The consequence of this scrutiny in the House of Lords was, that the bill was returned to the Commons in a form which, instead of restricting the powers of the Lord Chamberlain, materially increased them; and in moving the rejection of the amendments of the House of Lords, the honourable member

for Finsbury said, that if he knew one mode by which he could more forcefully than by another mark the contempt of the House of Commons for their Lordships' mutilations, he would adopt that mode. A few days after this circumstance, his Majesty's death dissolved the Parliament.

I presume that few of my readers have been engaged in the mournful duty of guarding, according to the forms of state, the remains of their departed sovereign; and, as having been employed upon it on the present occasion, a reference to it may be considered a pardonable digression. The room erected in the Waterloo Gallery of Windsor Castle, for the ceremony of lying in state, was one of comparatively small dimensions; and being completely covered with black cloth, lighted by about one hundred and sixty large wax candles; the centre occupied by the royal coffin reposing under a rich canopy, the head, foot, and sides lined by lords in waiting, gentlemen ushers, heralds, and gentlemen at arms, bearing various standards and banners, the barriers defended by a detachment of the yeoman of the guard, and the farther end crammed with shoals of the gazing millions, it may be believed that in the month of July the heat was overpowering. During the period of the day when the apartment was thrown open to the public, very little opportunity presented itself for reflection, attention being absorbed by the necessity of standing in soldier-like order, and of cutting altogether as military a figure as possible, so that, even if you were fainting with heat and fatigue, the people might not have a chance of detecting any such weakness. It was somewhat diverting, nevertheless, to see the efforts of the more obese members (self included) struggling through a case of regimentals, and a cart-load of accoutrements; to sustain a genteel and thin appearance amongst the more dandified part of the creation by which they were surrounded, and to watch the conflict for pre-eminence in appearance, in a scene where all such worldly feelings should be hushed; but it is nature in life, that only death itself can alter the character of. It was, however, when

" The midnight bell

Did, with his own iron tongue and brazen mouth,  
Sound one unto the drowsy race of night"—

—when nearly all this substantial pageant had passed away—when the halls of the Castle had become a desert, their tenants sunk in sleep, and when silence reigned around—that contemplation had full and free opportunity of enjoyment, while at the head of the coffin a noble lord was sipping "the honey-heavy

dew of slumber," while some poursuivant, with folded arms and crossed legs, was following such peerless example, and the drowsy guards also if they had dared—when lights were expiring in their sockets before the approaching gleam of the morning's first gray hue, and at intervals the sound from the neighbouring clock-tower was booming over the solemn scene—I could not but reflect on the short space of time that had elapsed since the illustrious tenant of the gilded receptacle I was guarding had, within a few yards of the room we were then in, denied a boon to the poor player-king, praying for the exercise of a worldly privilege. Methought of the bard divine who hath so grandly sung—

" When that this body did contain a spirit,  
A kingdom for it was too small a bound;  
But now, two paces of the vilest earth  
Is room enough."

The mighty and the exalted had passed on to the enjoyment, it is hoped, of a brighter and a less perishable crown than that of this transitory scene, while the lately humble and powerless now stood there in greater power, (the power of the quick over the DEAD,) a spectator of the scene, and of the distinctions which death had levelled. Very early in the morning, the noble *arbiter elegantiarum*, the courteous Lord Chamberlain, did me the favour of holding converse with me; and, by way of diverting the theme, inquired of me how the theatres were getting on. I told him so far the truth, that they were both in a state of actual starvation: had it not been a breach of etiquette, I *could* have told his lordship that he was in a great measure the cause of the distress of one of them, but I was satisfied with the honour of his lordship's recognition, and we parted—I bowed down with the weight of conferred dignities! and his lordship with the consciousness of having conferred them! "What is honour? A word. What is in that word honour? What is that honour? Air—A trim reckoning. Who hath it? He that died o' Wednesday. Doth he feel it? No. Doth he hear it? No. Is it insensible then? Yea, to the dead. But will it not live with the living? No. Why? Detraction will not suffer it!:" What a lesson this is, if man would but profit by it, and especially the man who is now writing about it!

The circumstances in connexion with Madame Pasta's engagement occurred at Windsor the 17th May, and even as late as the 31st May we find the good old King lending his powerful support in behalf of a ball for the Spitalfields weavers. Taglioni la *déesse de la danse*, being exclusively engaged to me,

(professionally be it understood,) could not dance elsewhere, during her engagement, without my sanction; to obtain which the following letter was sent to Drury Lane Theatre:

"The Duke of Beaufort presents his compliments to Mr. Bunn, and begs to inform him that a wish having been expressed by his Majesty that some dances should be executed by the professional dancers at the Spitalfields weavers' ball to-morrow evening, it has been proposed that Madlle Taglioni and her sister-in-law should dance a gavotte, to which she has consented, if Mr. Bunn's permission can be obtained. The Duke trusts that, under the circumstances above mentioned, Mr. Bunn will kindly grant that permission.

"Park Place, Wednesday evening,

"May 31, 1837."

It was not for an humble individual like myself to recur to the injury I had suffered by the refusal of my petition in the instance of Madame Pasta. My obvious duty was to obey even the slightest wish of my gracious sovereign, conveyed as it was by one of the most generous, kind, and deservedly popular nobleman to be found in that sovereign's dominions; and I only mention the matter in fartherance of the reflection it carried with it, that in three weeks after this manifestation of our excellent hearted monarch's feelings for the welfare of a suffering body of his subjects, he was himself the subject of THEIR feelings,

"A clod  
And module of confounded royalty."

That the reader may know how the royal theatres are affected by a calamity of this description, a copy of the official document issued on the present occasion is here introduced:

"Lord Chamberlain's Office,  
"June 20, 1837.

"SIR,

"I am authorized by the Lord Chamberlain to acquaint you, that it having been taken into consideration the very great distress which the shutting up of the theatres for any length of time would occasion to numerous families, the Queen has commanded that the closing of the theatre under your management, on account of the melancholy event of the demise of our late most gracious sovereign, shall be confined to this evening, the

two days of the body lying in state, and the day of the funeral, of which due notice will be given you.

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"WILLIAM MARTINS.

"To the Manager of  
"the Theatre Royal Drury Lane."

But let us return to the world again, and wind up the season of 1836-37. Amongst the many horrors I have had to encounter in the shape of performers, and especially foreign performers, I have never met a greater than one at this time under my management, though her superior talents have no warmer admirer than her late manager. Madame Schroeder Devrient was engaged in the first instance at £80 per night, to commence the first week in May, and on the day she was expected in England this letter was received from her:

"Hamburgh, le 28 April, 1837.

"MON CHER MONSIEUR BUNN,

"Je suis bien fâché d'être obligé de vous faire l'annonce que je ne peut arriver à Londres que la 10-12 May. L'horrible temps que nous avons eu ce mois-ci en Allemagne, a tellement detenu mon voyage que je suis en retard avec tous mes engagements de 15 jours. Je ferais mon possible pour finir plus tôt mon engagement ici, que j'avais accepter avant le vôtre et qui je suis au moins obliger dans tenir la moitié. J'espère que les peu de jours que j'arrive plus tard, ne seront pas grande différence, parceque je n'ai qu'à chanter 16 fois chez vous, je peut bien finir encore dans la bonne saison.

"J'ai bien travailler avec la langue Anglaise, et je me suis donner toute la paine possible pour bien reussir; je pose tout mon espoir sur le grand peuple Anglais, qui j'en suis sûr aura de l'indulgence with the *endeavor* d'une artiste étrangere qu'elle cherche son plus grand orgueille la dedans de reussir dans une langue dans laquelle les plus grand esprits de tous les siècles ont parlé au monde entier.

"J'ai encore une demande à vous faire. Seriez-vous assez aimable, cher ami, de me procurer un logement à Londres pas trop cher, dans une bonne rue, et pas trop loin du théâtre. J'ai besoin de trois chambres pour moi, et une pour mon domestique. J'espère que vous auriez la bonté de m'envoyer une ligne de réponse, et que vous n'êtes pas trop fâché que je viens quelques jours plus tard. *Fidelio* sera toujours mon premier début, n'est-ce pas? *La Norma* me fera grand plaisir de la chanter à

Londres. N'avez vous pas faire traduire *Romeo* de Bellini? Je voudrais bien le chanter.

"Au revoir si tôt qui possible, au plus tard le 12 Mai. Avec toute amitié et respect,

"Votre humble,

"WILHELMINE SCHROEDER DEVRIENT.

"Monsieur Monsieur Bunn,

"Directeur du Théâtre Royal, Drury Lane,

"Londres."

Though I am not accountable for her bad French, I had to suffer for her bad conduct; for she began her engagement (pardon the Hibernianism) by breaking it, being unable to make her appearance before the 15th. Owing to this circumstance, occasional indisposition, and an impression always uppermost in the mind of a foreigner that the receipts were enormous, the original conditions of her contract were, towards the last few days of its period, departed from, and by mutual consent she was to be paid a *clear* FOURTH of each night's receipts. Her share for performing on Monday the 17th July produced her *only* £32 10s.!! and on the following morning, the last of the season, when the advertisement and bills announcing her to appear in *Fidelio* and the last act of *Romeo* had been many hours distributed over the town, this letter, signed, but not written, by her, was received by me:

"MONSIEUR,

"Je le dois à la dignité de l'art que j'exerce, et à mon propre honneur, de vous dire nettement, que pour une somme telle que j'ai reçue hier je ne me présenterai pas à la scène aujourd'hui. Si vous voulez donc que je joue ce soir, je ne le ferai qu'après avoir reçu de vous la garantie sûre d'un revenu de cent livres! La conviction dont je crois devoir me flatter d'avoir constamment fait tous mes efforts pour satisfaire le public devant lequel j'ai eu l'honneur de jouer, me fait croire que la demande que je vous adresse ici sera jugée juste et convenable par tout le monde, surtout par quiconque sait que ce ne fut pas la première fois hier que j'ai reçu une somme bien au-dessous de celle fixée dans notre contrat. Je vous prie, Monsieur, de me faire savoir votre décision le plutôt possible. Si vous consentirez à ma demande, je ne manquerai pas de jouer, mais en commençant par le dernier acte de *Romeo*, et en finissant avec *Fidelio*.

"WILHELMINE SCHROEDER DEVRIENT.

"Le 18 Jul. 1837."

I told the reader in a preceding chapter, that players were a very funny set of people, and surely my assertion will be borne out by this letter, which sets off by saying that the writer owes it to the dignity of her art to depart from the agreement by which she was exercising that art, and, not satisfied with the £32 10s. for a night's performance paid her under that agreement, to demand £100. My reply was a very simple affair, merely stating that I should not pay her a farthing more than her agreement warranted, leaving the public, in case of her absence, to decide between us. Being determined on not deviating a jot to the right or to the left, she gave way and fulfilled her duty, but a more brazen instance of what the multitude call a "try-on" never was attempted on a manager.

I will now leave it to any dispassionate reader to determine, whether the deserter's back under the lash of the drummer is not almost a preferable state of existence, when compared with the life of a manager under the afflictions of such a season as this. Taglioni was engaged on unheard-of terms to "back up" Malibran's "*off-nights*," and the ink which signed the contract was scarcely dry, before the astounding intelligence was received of the death of her whose engagement led to the other. The *hiatus* was filled up, as well, perhaps, as it could be, by Madame Schroeder Devrient, and the farther deficiency might have been supplied by Madame Pasta, if her performance had not been prohibited—a prohibition felt doubly severe, as happening at the very time that the licenses to all the minor theatres in the Lord Chamberlain's jurisdiction had been extended—thus cutting our throats with a two-edged sword. But ours was a patent theatre! that was *some* comfort! Then the fortuitous attraction of Mr. Charles Kemble's retirement rendered a reduction of the prices absolutely necessary in the middle of a season, after all contracts based upon the former prices had been made for that season: and finally, the death of the King, the accession of her Majesty, and the dissolution of Parliament, with all the excitement, attendant on such events, literally distracted people's attention from theatrical pursuits, and wofully thinned the ranks of those who might otherwise have been disposed to pay us a visit. With all these drawbacks, despite all the attractions that were given, the season terminated in a loss: yet, as in all such cases, to *be* poor, and to *seem* poor, are held to be irreconcilable; so, on the 18th of July, after the termination of Madame Devrient's labours, poor Malibran's *hôtel garni*, Mr. John Cooper, bobbed on before the public in his capacity of stage manager, and thanked them for the patronage they had bestowed upon our exertions. It is not possible to conceive a greater degree of humbug than thanking people for what they have

*not* done—for that is the actual meaning of most of the speeches which wind up the season of a London theatre. It seemed to me latterly so broad a farce, that, though as fond as any one of a good laugh, I would rather not enjoy it at my own expense, and the practice was therefore discontinued with me. But I see it still put in force by some of my lively survivors, without an atom more of truth in the declaration than used to be embodied in the intellectual valedictions of Mr. John Cooper. The bard “who drew *Achitophel*” has written,

“ ’Tis easy conduct when exchequers flow,  
But hard the task to manage well the low :

the truth of which is so applicable to theatrical matters, one would think that, in addition to a playwright, the author of this couplet had been a manager.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

New reading of a passage in *Macbeth*, and a new lessee—Ambition defined—Bartley’s value in a new speculation—His attempt to upset an old one—A good chance for all kinds of performers—A butcher’s cur—For particulars inquire of Mr. Forster—Taking a chop with a manager—Singular proposal to Mr. Charles Kean, contrasted with a singular one made to his father by Mr. Charles Kemble—Difference between the pride of certain performers—Symptoms of war between the two theatres—Announcement for announcement—The voice of the public press defined—outrageous exaggeration disposed of—Distress of overpaid performers, and a proposed remedy for it—The drama’s laws—How to advance the British drama—And reasons for so doing—And the result of so doing—“Look here upon this picture, and on this”—A sure way of being deceived.

TOWARDS the latter end of the season, the termination of which has just been recorded, Mr. Osbaldiston had signified to the proprietors of Covent Garden Theatre his reading of *Macbeth*’s celebrated expression, “hold—enough!” and declined going on any farther with the enterprise. It was evident from the first, that a perseverance in the system which induced that gentleman to take Covent Garden theatre never could succeed, and no better proof of it can be adduced than Mr. Osbaldiston’s relinquishing the undertaking. It was a speculation entered upon in error, carried on in error, and abandoned in prudence; and of his managerial career at Covent Garden it may be justly said,



“ Nothing in his life  
Became him like the leaving it.”

His secession led to Mr. Macready's assuming the reins of government, inasmuch as he could not have become lessee if his predecessor had *not* seceded ; but when the field was open to him, his *real* motives for taking upon himself the responsibilities of lesseeship, though latent, were more powerful than will be at first imagined. I by no means seek to infer that Mr. Macready's ill-feeling to me was the sole cause of his entering the arena of management against me. It was one reason, and no doubt operated very powerfully upon the other ; and that other was the most extraordinary degree of conceit, backed by the most extraordinary degree of calculation, imaginable. It seemed to him fully evident that the prospect of his establishing himself in the situation of a leading tragedian in London, or of obtaining good engagements any where else, was very remote, unless he adopted some unusual expedient ; for Covent Garden Theatre was tenantless, his outrage upon me had closed Drury Lane against him, and Mr. Forrest had returned to his native country, to reap an additional harvest, arising from the additional fame he had obtained in England : and thus, three great sources of emolument and renown were inaccessible to him. He must, therefore, either remain an ordinary (and ordinary enough, heaven knows!) stock actor, or make some desperate effort to be gazed upon in the light of a constellation. Mr. Counsellor Phillips was called into professional notoriety by a speech in a crim. con. case, in which, amongst other rhapsodies, he says, “ Ambition has, indeed, been called a vice, but then a vice so equivocal, it bordered upon virtue : that though it reposed on earth's pinnacles, it played in heaven's lightnings,” and so on—and it was this sort of Hibernian ambition that haunted Mr. Macready—

. . . . . “ a dizziness  
That wouldn't let the gentleman go about his business ;

and determined him upon making a tremendous effort—a kind of *aut Cæsar aut nullus* affair altogether. Had not Mr. Macready been a performer, and had the intentions upon which it was pompously announced that Covent Garden Theatre was to be conducted, been carried into execution, a more salutary system for the welfare of the drama could not in the present day have been pursued. Although this side of the question is perhaps the only one with which the public has any thing to do, yet, as private feelings, so very frequently actuate conduct, and especial-

ly actuated his, we must enter a little upon that part of the business.

Previous to the end of my last season, the rumour was rife that Mr. Macready was about to enter upon management; and it soon became known by the agency of a performer then engaged to me, and subsequently to him, he was trying to detach some useful servants belonging to Drury Lane Theatre; and in one or two instances, where little talent and no principle regulated the parties, he succeeded. The usual joke—"O it *must* succeed, it's so very respectable—Bartley's in it!" was then circulated about town, and the parties went to work in earnest. Notwithstanding the liabilities Mr. Macready undertook, he reserved to himself the power of abandoning them at pleasure; and thus, while he could terminate his season whenever he thought proper, and so put an end to farther loss, I was bound by a lease of three years, determinable only at the pleasure of the lessors. This novel state of things very materially altered my position, and induced me to seek a similar advantage from my landlords. They met on the 10th of August to discuss my application, and about an hour after their meeting had broken up, at which they had expressed a willingness to aid me in any possible way consistent with the duty they had to fulfil to their constituency, the following specious letter came to hand.

"Theatre Royal Covent Garden,  
"10th Aug. 1837.

"Mr. Bartley presents his compliments to Mr. Dunn. In consequence of the circulation of statements respecting Mr. Macready's tenure of Covent Garden Theatre, tending to prejudice his interests with the public, and to injure the various parties holding property in the patent theatres, he (Mr. Bartley) is requested by that gentleman in justice to himself and all such parties and in contradiction of the misrepresentations made on the subject, to inform Mr. Dunn, as treasurer to the general committee of Drury Lane Theatre, that Mr. Macready has taken Covent Garden Theatre from the proprietors at a very heavy rent, to be paid in large nightly proportions, before any other demand can be answered; and that the loss on his speculation, to whatever amount it may be allowed to run, must be defrayed from his own private funds.

"Mr. Bartley begs to forward this declaration of the real facts of the case, to obviate the necessity of a published statement.

"To William Dunn, Esq.,  
"Treasurer to the General Committee of the  
"Theatre Royal Drury Lane, &c."

The obvious purport of this letter was to say to the committee, "If you have heard that Mr. Macready does not pay a heavy rent, and therefore mean to grant any accommodation to Mr. Bunn, I am requested to tell you to the contrary," taking pretty good care not to tell the committee upon what conditions the payment of that rent depended. Mr. Bartley's letter was, without any singular effort of ingenuity, seen through; and though, like myself, not one of the "lean kind," yet odd enough to say it is not difficult to see through Master George at any time. When the separation was about to take place between Messrs. Lee and Polhill in May 1831, each had his partisans in the theatre; for while Polhill found all the money, Lee possessed all the power. A canvass, therefore, was hotly pursued amongst the performers; and when that charming actress and intellectual woman, Mrs. Orger, was asked whether she was for Lee or Polhill, she archly replied, "I shall wait till I know which side Harley takes." So is it with Master George Bartley, who, ever since his departure from Glasgow, has taken special care to be on the safe side of the question. The annexed few lines, in reply to his letter, were sent by Mr. Dunn, and are remarkable for the clear, cool, and concise view my friend William takes of all matters brought under his consideration:

"Mr. Dunn presents his compliments to Mr. Bartley; begs to acknowledge the receipt of his communication, both to himself and the committee, which, however, did not come to hand until after the committee had broken up.

"Mr. Dunn is unable to comprehend the meaning or intent of the communication, inasmuch as it does not appear in any way to apply either to himself or the committee, and therefore need not put Mr. Bartley to the trouble of farther explanation on the subject."

What an inexplicable set of people performers are! It can scarcely be believed that the bait thrown out in the applications which were made to the profession generally, by the new Covent Garden management, seeking to enlist their enthusiasm in the present attempt at a restoration of the British drama, was swallowed in many instances, and the blockheads either could not, or would not, see that while it was sought materially to abridge their emoluments, no prospect presented itself of bettering their condition by any advancement of their talent. The comedians who were "hooked" could have no chance, because the Olympic possessed such a superior comic force as to drive *Thalia* from the patent boards. The lessee's aversion to music, as well known as the applicable lines in the *Merchant of Venice*,

“ The man that hath no music in himself,  
 Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,  
 Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;  
 The motions of his spirit are as night,  
 And his affections dark as Erebus—  
*Let no such men be TRUSTED,*”

put the vocalist in jeopardy; while tragedians, only hired to hold up their master's tail, were in a very fair way of being literally crucified. All this was evident to the meanest capacity; and yet many, with excellent understandings, chose, or affected to be blind on the occasion. The lessee was backed by a small clique, who followed him on his expulsion from Drury Lane—and were even more resolutely bent on upholding him now. One of the foremost of this redoubtable party, and, if possible, more enthusiastic on behalf of his idol, and more bitter against his idol's opponants, than even “my learned friend” Mr. Sergeant Talfourd, rejoiced then, and for aught I know to the contrary, rejoiceth now, in the name of Forster; and was entrusted with the power, which he exercised to its fullest extent, of reducing the *Examiner* Sunday journal, (that had sustained a hitherto unblemished reputation, and had rendered its columns famous by criticisms on all matters of art, and especially in connexion with theatres,) a vehicle of the most impudent and unblushing blackguardisms. I never had a transaction of any description with this person, and to my knowledge never saw him but once,—when entering my room, I saw a man lolling on a sofa in it, reading a paper, with as much nonchalance as if he had been in his own garret. He came with some message from Mr. Macready, at the time that performer was engaged with me; and on inquiring, after his departure, of Mr. Cooper who the party was, he replied, “Oh! that's Foster.” I was not made much wiser by this response and setting him down for some ill-bred individual who had been more accustomed to stand at the back of a chair than to occupy the seat of one, he passed from my mind, as all recollection of his person has from my memory; nor is it likely that even the name would ever have been brought back to it, but from the wanton, shameless, ignorant, and insolent attacks made upon me, week after week, in the said newspaper. That a man should uphold him whom he admires by every honourable means at his command, is not only natural but highly commendable—that he should resort, in order to effect his purpose, to calumny and falsehood, is as disgraceful to himself as it is injurious to the party whom he would serve. The parentage of any one is not, of itself, matter of the slightest reproach, as long as, through a descendant, what it owned of bad is made good,

and what of good made better. Hark to the Twickenham nightingale:

"Honour and shame from no condition rise—  
Act well your part—there all the honour lies"

and it would no more detract from this Forster's position, or from his talents, if he had any, than it did from those of Cardinal Wolsey, to know that each was the son of a butcher. But Shakspeare, in singing of the past, prophetically harped upon the future, when he framed that searching line,

"This butcher's car is venom-mouth'd;"

and it is high time that some person muzzled him. To such a pitch had Forster carried, his insolent conceit, at this time, that on entering Drury Lane one evening, he told the servant who had charge of the free list, that no other tragedian but Macready should ever succeed in London, as long as he could wield a pen! London must be in a most blessed condition if a prig of this standing can sway the opinions of any half dozen of its citizens. For my own part, though there is no species of abuse can exceed that which this fellow, without provocation, has heaped upon me, I can safely say, "there is not a withered leaf which the autumn wind strews upon the heath that is more valueless in my eyes," than he and all his scribblings. The bearing of this Forster, during the lesseeship of Mr. Macready, when he was permitted to enjoy the free range of the theatre, was more forbiddingly impudent than were even the things written by him, which he called criticism. I have been told that he was in the habit of ordering his chop as regularly in the manager's room, as if it had been an eating-house. "I hear it by the way," and mention it accordingly, but far beyond this, I have it on the authority of several practised performers, that he has repeatedly sat upon the stage during rehearsals, and delivered his judgment—nay, even his directions, as to its regulation. Had he done so on any stage under my management, and I could have lifted my foot sufficiently high, most assuredly I would have endeavoured to kick him off it.

Thus armed with self-conceit, and aided by others similarly equipped, Mr. Macready entered upon the management of Covent Garden Theatre in the season of 1837-8. No effort was left untried, no stone unturned, to enlist the enthusiasm, and of course—that beautiful word!—the "sympathy," of the British public in the cause of so much legitimacy; and to wheedle the profession into the operation of supporting it.

Amongst other applications made at the time, may be mentioned one that, for cunning and effrontery, surpasses any thing imaginable. Mr. Macready offered an engagement to Mr. Charles Kean, which the other prudently declined, knowing perfectly well that, under such auspices, his return to the metropolis must prove a disastrous failure. Macready had not to dread the reputation of any other tragic performer; and it was, therefore, part and parcel of his policy to conciliate Mr. Kean's adherents by proposing an engagement to him, and to crush him *by engaging him*. The offer of alternating principal characters with him displayed the cunning of the business; for if Macready had even played the *Ghost* to Kean's *Hamlet*, he would have taken care, by virtue of his office, to be received and better reported than the hero of the play. That he should offer such an engagement, and that the other should decline, is not at all to be wondered at, but his worthy the sequel to the correspondence of note. When Macready found that Kean saw through the whole affair—that he was not to be made another man's stepping-stone, and that no chance presented itself of including him amongst his other restorators of the British drama, he had the modesty to ask Mr. Charles Kean not to oppose his exertions, *by entering into an engagement at any other theatre!* If I had not been told this by Mr. Kean himself, I should have doubted the possibility of the art of humbug being carried to so impudent a pitch. There is but one instance in my knowledge on record, with which it will bear any comparison; and as this occurred with the manager of the same theatre, and with the father of the same performer, in is entitled to especial commemoration.

It has been already stated, and is well known, that the season of 1828-29, at Covent Garden, terminated in apparently utter ruin, the building and all that being seized by the parochial authorities, and the contents therein was advertised for sale. In this season Mr. Kean, senior, had partly fulfilled an engagement, which indiscretion and consequent ill health preventing his completing; Mr. C. Kemble finding that, through such reasons, his attraction was not equivalent to the payment of £50 per night, willingly let him off, but stipulated that he should play the uncompleted ten nights in the season of 1830-31; and that he should *not play* IN LONDON until that period arrived, being *more than a year and a half to come!* When the theatre was seized, and no probability existed of its re-opening, performers were perfectly justified in looking about themselves; and no doubt Mr. Kean did. An appeal to the public, and to the voluntary assistance of many performers, enabled the proprietors to open their establishment for the season of 1829-30; and amongst others who gratuitously offered to assist them was Mr.

Kean, who came up to London to fulfil his promise of giving them *three nights of his services*. But the success of Miss Fanny Kemble had made the manager, her father, pass over slightly many of the offers which led to the reopening of the theatre; and Mr. Kean's three nights' gift merged in the more important point of excluding him from London all that season, and of binding him to complete the aforesaid ten nights in the following season. I am no advocate for the disregard Mr. Kean, on more than one occasion, manifested for the maintenance of strict faith, as will be seen by a reference to page 83 of the first volume, but a more dog-in-the-manger piece of business than this never came under my cognizance. That the reader may judge of the merits of this case, and with the view of preserving documents of such theatrical eccentricity, the full statement of Mr. Charles Kemble himself is herewith subjoined.

“The Affidavit of Mr. Charles Kemble, sworn 28th November, states,

“That in the year 1828 he proposed to Mr. Kean to enter into an agreement to act at Covent Garden Theatre, to the effect following: Mr. Charles Kemble proposes the following terms to Mr. Kean—for twenty-four nights' performance, in the ensuing season, at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, viz. £50 for each night's performance, the engagement to commence on the 1st of October next, and to conclude previous to next Christmas. Mr. Kean to give the preference to the Covent Garden managers in the renewal of an engagement, and not to perform at any other theatre in London during the period of his engagement with the managers of Covent Garden Theatre, or previous to the commencement of it. London, February 25, 1828.

“That Mr. Kean accepted such proposal: at the foot of the same, the words, ‘I accept the above proposal,’ were written and signed by Mr. Kean.

“That in pursuance of such agreement Mr. Kean acted at Covent Garden for several nights; but in consequence of the theatre being closed from an accident that had happened to the gas works, Mr. Kean did not perform the whole twenty-four nights for which he was engaged, before Christmas 1828, but only sixteen of them. Mr. Kemble then proposed to Mr. Kean that the above agreement should be terminated, and another agreement, to commence after Christmas 1828, should be entered upon; but to be extended from eight nights of performance, which remained under the first agreement, to twelve nights, and to be upon the same terms as are specified in the first agreement; to which proposal Mr. Kean acceded; and accordingly he

acted at Covent Garden on the nights of the 5th and 8th of January, 1829, and received the sum of £50 for each night, and the performance of Mr. Kean in *Richard the Second* was advertised for the 12th of January, 1829, but on that night Mr. Kean was not in a condition to appear before the public, and he did not act.

"That in a few days afterwards, Mr. Phillips, a friend of Mr. Kean, called on Mr. Kemble, and stated that he came at the request of Mr. Kean to say, that after what had passed, he was very desirous that some arrangement should be made to enable Mr. Kean to suspend his performances in London and retire into the country for some time, with a view to recruit his health, and to enable him to study some new parts; as he felt that his attraction in those parts in which he was accustomed to act was diminished, and Mr. Phillips, in making such proposal, acted with the authority of Mr. Kean. That Mr. Kemble, and his co-acting proprietors, most readily complied with such wish of Mr. Kean, and Mr. Kemble addressed to him a letter to the effect following:

"Theatre Royal, Covent Garden,  
"January 21, 1829.

"DEAR MR. KEAN,

"I have great pleasure in acquainting you that the proprietors of Covent Garden Theatre have every disposition to meet your wishes respecting the proposal with which you favoured me through your agent, Mr. Phillips, viz. that you shall be permitted to suspend all your performances here until the season after next, for the purpose of preparing yourself in two or three new characters; that you will be ready, on the commencement of the season 1830-31, to return when required to your engagement in Covent Garden Theatre, of which engagement there remain ten nights uncomplete, and which ten may, if you please, be extended to twenty-four nights in the first instance, and afterwards to as many more as may be thought mutually advantageous; in the mean time (it is understood) you are not to act in London. And now, my dear Mr. Kean, let me beg of you to fortify yourself in your good resolutions. Go to Bute, where I wish, with all my heart, I could join you; study your new parts, for, as Shakspeare says, 'Nothing pleases but rare accidents,' and your own experience must have taught that perfection itself without novelty will, in the course of time, become a drug; return to London with renovated health, and run another course as prosperous as the first. That you may do so is the very sincere wish of,

"Dear Mr. Kean,

"Yours most truly,

"C. KEMBLE."



"That Mr. Kean accepted the terms in such letter, and accordingly wrote and signed the following letter to Mr. Kemble:

"Barnes Terrace.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Your letter confirms my first impression of your character—namely, that you are a good man, and a good actor. Your kindness in the first instance of our meeting cannot be erased, and the second is placed in the monument of memory. I regret, in your letter, telling me you cannot visit Bute—Shakspere, you, and I, I think, would form a most excellent companionship, (*paucis cum paribus facillime congregantur*;) but I shall obey your injunctions, and fortify my constitutional batteries against the new campaign.

"My dear Sir,

"With sincere respect,

"EDMUND KEAN.

"P.S.—I accept the proposals made by the managers of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden. E. KEAN. I had nearly forgotten all this."

"That this last-mentioned letter had no date affixed to it when received, but Mr. Phillips called on Mr. Kemble by the authority of Mr. Kean and added the day of the date on which the same was written, viz.: 'January 22, 1829,' and wrote thereunder the date added by Mr. Phillips by Mr. Kean's authority.

"That in consequence of the agreement contained in the letter of the 21st January, 1829, and so accepted by Mr. Kean, the latter ceased to perform at Covent Garden, by which the proprietors sustained a very considerable loss.

"That in consequence of the embarrassed state of the affairs of Covent Garden, an appeal was made to the public, and several actors of eminence offered their services gratuitously during the present season of 1829-30.

"That Mr. Kemble has been informed by Mr. Henry Robertson, the treasurer of the theatre, that on the 22d day of the present month of November, a person called at the box-office of the theatre, and said he came, by desire of Mr. Kean, to inform him that Mr. Kean was just arrived in London, and should be happy to see some one from the theatre, and he added, *that the Drury Lane people were already about Mr. Kean.*

"That he has been informed by Mr. Bartley, the stage-manager of Covent Garden, that Mr. Bartley, on the following day, had an interview with Mr. Kean, at his residence in Duke-street, Adelphi, and that at the commencement of such inter-

view Mr. Kean informed Mr. Bartley that at that time there were in the house *two persons from Drury Lane Theatre*; and Mr. Bartley was at that time unable to make any arrangement with Mr. Kean as to said three nights, and parted with Mr. Kean, on an understanding that Mr. Kean would call the next day at Covent Garden, to meet Mr. Kemble on the subject. That on the following day Mr. Kean sent to Mr. Bartley the following letter:

“ November 24, 1829.

“ DEAR BARTLEY,

“ I am very unwell this morning; the fatigue of travelling such an immense distance has nearly overcome me, and nothing but the cause,—the cause, my soul,—could reconcile me to the exertion. Numerous engagements are pouring in upon me, and I should like to get rid of the three nights as fast as I conveniently can. What say you to next Monday, Wednesday, and Friday? I give the management to understand that I play on no other nights but those I have been accustomed to in both the London theatres.

“ Yours, dear Bartley,

“ Very truly,

“ EDMUND KEAN.”

“ G. Bartley, Esq.”

“ To which Mr. Bartley, at the desire of Mr. Kemble, sent the following reply:

“ Theatre Royal, Covent Garden,

“ November 24, 1829.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ I was waiting with Mr. Kemble in expectation of the pleasure of meeting you here as appointed at our interview yesterday, when your letter of this morning was delivered to me. Mr. Kemble requests me to say that he is most anxious to consult your convenience, but the nights of Monday, Wednesday, and Friday in next week, which you suggest for your performances, are advertised for *Romeo and Juliet*, and I need not say to you that our duty to the public renders any alteration now impossible. As you observe that you can play on no other nights but those you have been accustomed to in both the London theatres, I can only assure you that every endeavour shall be made to comply with your wishes. Before, however, we say more on this point, Mr. Kemble desires that I should remind you, in allusion to the intimation which you made to me yesterday, of your intention to enter into an engagement in London for this season, that there is

an engagement subsisting between you and Covent Garden Theatre, which precludes your acting in London during the present season, and he thinks it just to all parties that this should not escape attention. It will afford Mr. Kemble much satisfaction to accommodate circumstances to your present views; and difficult as it will be, at this advanced period of the season, to make such alterations in the arrangements of the theatre, (which arrangements have been made on the faith of your agreement,) as will enable him to do so, he is ready to encounter such difficulty *on your account*, and with this feeling he was prepared to make you an offer of an engagement for this season, had you been able to meet him.

"As you are unwell to-day, if you will favour us with an appointment for to-morrow, Mr. Kemble will be happy to talk the matter over with you.

"You will be kind enough to receive this communication expressly on the understanding that it is made without prejudice to your present agreement with Covent Garden Theatre.

"GEORGE BARTLEY."

"That he has been informed by Mr. Bartley, that no answer was received from Mr. Kean to the last-mentioned letter, nor did he call at Covent Garden, and Mr. Bartley therefore, on the 26th instant, wrote to Mr. Kean the following letter:—

"Theatre Royal, Covent Garden,  
"Thursday, Nov. 26, 1829.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I hoped you would before this have favoured Mr. Kemble with an appointment, as I requested in my letter of Tuesday the 24th. I think he would have proposed an arrangement that would have been found satisfactory. Pray let me have the pleasure of hearing from you.

"I am, my dear Sir,

"Faithfully yours,

"GEORGE BARTLEY."

"To Edmund Kean, Esq."

"To which Mr. Kemble has been informed by Mr. Bartley, and believes, no reply has been received, nor has Mr. Kean ever since called at Covent Garden, nor at any other place, on Mr. Kemble, or, as he is informed and believes, on the other plaintiffs, (that is to say, other proprietors,) or either of them, or Mr. Bartley.

"That he has been informed and believes, that Mr. Kean has, within these few days, but when in particular he does not know,

accepted some engagement, or has agreed to act at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, upon certain terms unknown to Mr. Kemble, and that such engagement is to commence on Monday next, the 30th November.

"That by the terms of the engagement subsisting between Mr. Kean, Mr. Kemble, and the other plaintiffs, Mr. Kean has undertaken and agreed not to act in London until he has completed his said agreement, and Mr. Kemble is advised that Mr. Kean will be guilty of a breach of his agreement if he acts at Drury Lane, as he has agreed to do; and Mr. Kemble and the other plaintiffs will sustain great and irreparable injury thereby, and they have therefore, in manner aforesaid, applied to Mr. Kean, and requested him not to act at said Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, as he had agreed, and threatens to do, but to fulfil his said agreement; Mr. Kemble and the other plaintiffs being willing, as they have always been, to perform the same in all respects.

"That he has been informed by Mr. Bartley, that in the conversation between Mr. Bartley and Mr. Kean, the latter expressly admitted that he was under an engagement with Mr. Kemble and the other plaintiffs.

"That as evidence of the intention of Mr. Kean to perform at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, the appearance of Mr. Kean is advertised in the play-bills published by the manager of Drury Lane, for Friday, 27th November last, in the following terms:—'The manager has great pleasure in announcing to the public, that Mr. Kean has kindly volunteered his services in aid of the establishment which first fostered his talent, and will act Richard III. on Monday—Othello on Wednesday—and Sir Giles Overreach on Friday next.' And that in another part of the bill Mr. Kean's appearance is advertised as follows:—'Monday, Richard III.; Duke of Gloster, Mr. Kean. Wednesday, Othello, Mr. Kean. Friday, A New Way to Pay Old Debts; Sir Giles Overreach, Mr. Kean.'

"Mr. Kemble believes that Mr. Kean has authorized such advertisements, and intends to act on the nights and in the characters so advertised, and he is advised and submits that Mr. Kean ought to be restrained by the injunction of the Court from acting at Drury Lane Theatre, or at any other place in London, until he shall have acted ten nights at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, in the season 1830-31, according to the terms of the agreement hereinbefore set forth."

Let the reader now dispassionately weigh all this in his mind—let him compare it with Mr. Macready's position relative to Mr. Charles Kean, and if he happens to be one who, without having

any insight into my management, has thought proper to abuse me, let him understand that I should have thought myself only fit to be kicked off my stage, If I could even have contemplated such a proceeding. But persons were to be found who pitied Mr. Charles Kemble; and I have seen it roundly asserted in print, and heard sundry blockheads assert *vivá voce*, that Mr. Charles Kean used Mr. Macready very ill by playing first fiddle at Drury Lane, instead of playing second fiddle at Covent Garden. This "top-proud\* fellow" seems literally to have thought the world (the dramatic world at all events) was made for him, and him alone, as it will be our business to make manifest.

The necessary preparations being completed, the following announcement made its appearance:

"THEATRE ROYAL COVENT GARDEN.

"Mr. Macready begs most respectfully to announce, that this theatre will open under his direction on Saturday, September 30.

"It will not, he trusts, be deemed presumptuous in him to state generally and briefly the views with which he has ventured upon an undertaking, the duties of which, when worthily discharged, are most arduous, and the responsibilities to him most serious. Neither will it, he farther trusts, be deemed invidious or indelicate in him to allude to the actual circumstances of the national stage.

"The decline of the drama, as a branch of English literature, is a matter of public notoriety. The *distressed state* and *direct losses* of those whose profession is the stage, if less generally known, are more severely felt. Under these circumstances he has become the lessee of Covent Garden Theatre, with the resolution to devote his utmost zeal, labour, and industry, to improve the condition of that great national theatre; and with the hope of interesting the public in his favour by his humble but strenuous endeavours *to advance the drama as a branch of national literature and art*, it will be his study to ac-

\* The pride of some people differs from that of others. I was passing through Jermyn-street late one evening, and seeing Kenney at the corner of St. James's Church, swinging about in a nervous sort of manner, I inquired the cause of his being there at such an hour.—He replied, "I have been to the St. James's Theatre, and do you know I really thought Braham was a much prouder man than I find him to be." On asking him why, he answered, "I was in the green-room, and hearing Braham say, as he entered, I am really proud of my pit to-night, I went and counted it, and there were but seventeen people in it!"

comply with this object by the fidelity, appropriateness, and superior execution of scenic illusion.

"He has received promises of the most friendly and zealous co-operation from able and distinguished authors, and he has spared no expense or pains in forming an efficient company. As English opera has become an essential part of the amusements of a metropolitan audience, he has been anxious to procure the aid of native musical talent, and trusts *he has succeeded in his engagements* with composers, singers, and instrumental performers.

"Some alterations in the theatre, made with the view to consult the convenience and the respectability of the audience, will be best appreciated from experience. It will suffice to state, that the first circle of boxes has now a private lobby, similar to that of the dress-circle, so that parties who may choose to occupy that part of the house will not be exposed to intrusions, hitherto justly complained of as offensive.

"A change in the prices of admission has also been found absolutely necessary. In regulating them, a mean has been taken between the high scale of former seasons and the reduced scale, which the experience of the two last seasons has proved wholly inadequate to the proper maintenance of the establishment.

"It remains for him to add one thing more. Instead of announcing the reception of new performances by *outrageous exaggerations in the play-bills*, he will trust to the impression carried away by the audience, and *to the voice of the public press*.

"In fine, he most respectfully hopes the public will extend its indulgence as well as patronage to an undertaking upon which he has entered with a comparatively short interval for preparation, at a time when the condition of the theatre was such, as to demand even more than ordinary activity and attention.—September 23, 1837."

It will be well to analyze this pretty document, and find out, if possible, the meaning of it. In consequence of "the decline of the drama," and the "distressed state" and "direct losses of its professors," Mr. Macready states that he became the lessee of Covent Garden Theatre "with the hope of advancing the drama as a branch of national literature and art." By this it would seem that the actors shared the fallen fate of the drama, instead of having led to it, according to the argument I have all along maintained; and Mr. Macready proposed to repair the damage done to both. Having, in a previous part of these pages, been arguing that the performers had mainly contributed to the

destruction of their art, and a brother manager being found to argue to the contrary, it behoveth me to state the grounds of *my* argument, and to see how my opponent has carried out *his*. Do the enormous salaries that have been paid to Messrs. Kean, Young, C. Kean, Braham, Macready, Farren, C. Kemble, Power, Liston, Miss Stephens, Miss E. Tree, &c. &c., and the liberal, and in some respects exorbitant, salaries which have been paid to Messrs. Bartley, Jones, Harley, Wallack, T. P. Cooke, Wrench, Cooper, Warde, Keeley, H. Phillips, Templeton, Wilson, Balfe, Vandenhoff, Mesdames Inverarity, Romer, Shirreff, Phillips, and a host of others, bear testimony, to "the distressed state" of the parties who have received them? It is perfectly true, that some of these worthy people have suffered "direct losses" by the failure of the theatres in which they have been engaged; but that failure has been generally, if not invariably, brought about by the extravagant demands of those very people who have suffered those very losses: and even then, looking at the result, you will find that many of those herein enumerated are in affluent, and, with a single exception or so, ALL are in comfortable circumstances: so that in reality, while the art has gone to the devil, the professors of it have flourished marvellously. Can the new lessee, despite all his blustering announcement, disprove this statement of the case?—or can he point out instances of "the distressed state" of these recited professors?—and if he can, will he say how he proposed to, and how he actually did, alleviate their "distressed state?" Did he raise the salaries of the different performers he enlisted in the sacred cause of restoring the national drama? and did he give them better business than they had been in the habit of playing? (the only two modes by which "the distressed state" of a performer can very well BE alleviated.) Not he: on the contrary, his salary list was pared down almost to a nicety, and the greater part of his company were nightly degraded and oppressed. This portion of his announcement therefore is, to say the least of it, a joke; because the professors of the art were *not* in a "distressed state;" and if they had been, his system but distressed them the more. The only really distressed individual mixed up with the new scheme, was Mr. Macready himself. He, poor fellow, had only received from his late manager some £30 or £40 per week, and it was imperative upon him, therefore, to give himself a lift; and we shall presently see what sort of a lift he *did* give himself. In scrutinizing this document still more, our attention is directed to the parade of the lessee's having procured "the aid of native musical talent, English opera having become an essential part of the amusements of a metropolitan audience:" and still farther on, we are regaled with a statement, that "instead of

announcing the reception of new performances by outrageous exaggerations in the play-bills, the lessee will trust to the impression carried away by the audience, and to the voice of the public press,"—pretty palaver! and yet the cockneys swallowed this trash at the onset, though they have long since disgorged the dose. We will tell why, presently—in the mean time, as it was manifest to the commonest understanding that the drift of Mr. Macready's announcement was levelled against myself and my shishtem, (as Doctor O'Toole has it,) I took the liberty in, advertising the opening of Drury Lane, to reply to it in an indirect manner, thus:

"Theatre Royal Drury Lane. The lessee begs most respectfully to announce that this theatre will open for the *winter season* on Saturday next, October 7, 1837.

It has been the custom, and very properly so, for new managers to make new professions, and boast of new regulations: the lessee of Drury Lane Theatre feels that any such course would be at once useless and unbecoming on his part.

"It is a matter of notoriety that the distressed state of the national theatres owes its origin to the exorbitant demands made by certain professors, to the prejudice of the whole community; yet, with this difficulty to contend against, the lessee has upheld the legitimate drama in a far more effective way than it can possibly be represented at the present moment; but if he has almost invariably sustained a heavy nightly loss by the performance of such plays as *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Richard the Third*, *Hamlet*, *Every Man in his Humour*, *School for Scandal*, &c., while the representation of such novelties as *Gustavus the Third*, *the Jewess*, *the Siege of Rochelle*, *St. George*, *King Arthur*, &c. &c., (each played about one hundred nights in the season it was first performed,) has been productive of great nightly gain, it is obvious that by this selection public pleasure and private enterprise have been equally consulted.

"Mr. Garrick, delivered in a prologue, on the stage of Drury Lane Theatre in 1747, the following opinion of Dr. Johnson, with reference to legitimate or illegitimate performances of the stage under the management of that eminent tragedian:

"Ah, let not censure term our fate our choice—  
The stage but echoes back the public voice;  
The drama's laws the drama's patrons give,  
And we who live to please must please to live.

"It remains for the lessee to add but one thing more. Not-



withstanding he has had to combat the rivalry of an almost annual succession of managers; instead of announcing any outrageous exaggeration respecting himself, he will simply state a determination to continue his humble exertions for the promotion of public amusement, and to sustain the character Drury Lane has long enjoyed of being the **FIRST THEATRE OF THE EMPIRE.**

“September 30, 1837.”

The gauntlet being now fairly thrown down, let us see how the battle was fought. It was natural to suppose, that in order to advance the drama as a “branch of national literature and art,” some means hitherto unadopted would be resorted to. The plays of our best masters must be performed in a much better manner than that in which they had been represented, and “the fidelity, appropriateness, and execution of the several means of scenic illusion,” must be maintained in a much superior style. As to the first part of the business, such plays *had* been represented by the talents of the great Kemble family, by the unapproachable Kean, by Messrs. Young, Charles Kemble, Macready, and Miss O’Neil, and during the very last season by Messrs. C. Kemble, Vandenhoff, and Macready. The “scenic illusion” had been for years sustained by the genius and talents of Messrs. Grieve, Stanfield, Greenwood, Whitmore, Marinari, Pugh, &c. &c., and could not therefore be equalled. However, Mr. Macready was bent upon **ADVANCING THE DRAMA** in both points of view, and therefore *he put himself* into all the leading business, without any such support as his predecessors were upheld by, and employed Mr. Marshall for the **SCENIC ILLUSION**!! One of his first efforts was a revival “from the text of Shakspeare,” at least as much was stated—(and in more instances than one, but in no one instance maintained.) The man who brought his troop of apes from Paris might with much more justice have exclaimed with *Othello*, “Goats and monkeys!”—*from the text of Shakspeare!*—It was all on a par with the vast parade that was subsequently made by “the voice of the public press,” of the lessee’s playing *Prospero*, a character which, in his last engagement with me, he stipulated *not* to play. What think ye of this, gentle reader? But let us come at once to this “voice of the public press,” and we shall then find out the secret of the whole business.

Previous to his assumption of the curule chair, Mr. Macready had received from the press the meed of as much approbation as was due to his abilities—he was frequently very justly condemned, occasionally deservedly commended. On his seating himself in the said chair, he became the idol of most who

wrote concerning him; for while the sentiments of the established journals remained unchanged, and were not to be changed by any venal means, a host of others sprang up that were to be influenced only by such means. I firmly believe that Mr. Macready put upon the free list of Covent Garden Theatre almost every metropolitan publication;—reviews, magazines, journals, penny pamphlets, half-penny squibs, and so on—and I will tell the reader why I believe so—because, for the first time during my long management, scores of writers in such productions, of whom, until that moment, I had never heard, applied to me for the freedom of Drury Lane Theatre, alleging as a reason why they ventured to apply, and why I ought to comply, that Mr. Macready had obligingly placed them on the free list of Covent Garden. Presuming this to be the case, any “outrageous exaggeration” thus insured “in the public press” outraged all “previous outrage.” Employing the Forster as a whipper-in, the lessee had only to signify his wishes, and the “sons of freedom” would “exaggerate” for him until they were “black in the face.” Do you not see through the whole affair now, good master reader? Do you not see that a manager, being an actor, could not, possessing Mr. Macready’s modesty, absolutely puff himself in his own plays, and uphold his own exertions by his own “outrageous exaggerations?” and the easier and more obvious mode, therefore, was, to let the scribes attached to his staff do it for him, passing it all off as “the voice of the public press.” Do you not see all this, and do you not see, in the back-ground, the really eminent writers in our leading journals and periodicals, smiling with ineffable contempt at this shameless prostitution of the strength of opinion and value of judgment they, on all occasions, deal out without prejudice to all alike?

But herein lay the secret. Mr. Macready was, by the press, to be written into the position of a leading tragedian, so that, even if he should lose any money in his speculation as manager of Covent Garden Theatre, it was easily recoverable by the terms he would be enabled to demand of other managers, when he ceased to be one himself. That such was the case, let us look at the result. Previous to his entering on that undertaking, a high, but in those days an ordinary, salary, was all that he could obtain in London; while in the provinces, but few managers were to be found who would wish to engage him at all. At the time I am making these memoranda, he is making, or has made, an engagement with Mr. Hammond to perform at Drury Lane Theatre, on a weekly salary of £100 for four nights, or rather one of £25 per night, (an engagement Mr. Hammond will rue, as long as he can hold the reins of management,)—while, in the provinces, he has had the effrontery to ask of

mine excellent friend Davidge, who has just taken a lease of the Bath Theatre, **HALF THE CLEAR RECEIPTS** of one Saturday, and has expressed his willingness to play two Saturdays more, for £60 each night; the said Saturday of course fixed upon, as being by many degrees the night in the best whole week! Nothing like "the voice of the public press" after all! and nothing, seemingly, like "outrageous exaggeration."

A little cool reflection will convince any man that the pretence which accompanied the production of Shakspeare's plays under Mr. Macready's management, was a worthless piece of puffery, intended to obtain for the actor a mental reputation, by virtue of the paraphernalia bestowed on the production of the works of the author: and a little more reflection will convince all, that Shakspeare's noblest plays had been far better acted, and much more elaborately produced, in both the patent theatres, than at any time they were under the management of this noble fellow, who stepped forward with "responsibilities to him most serious," to advance the drama *as a branch of national literature and ART!!*

After such a flourishing address as the one we have been examining, it was but natural to suppose that some wonderful collection of talent had been engaged, to delight and astound the citizens of London—that the rival theatre possessed none to be compared to it, and that "scenic illusion" was altogether out of the question, save and except at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden. I will therefore subjoin a list of the respective forces—name opposite to name, as far as principles are concerned, with which the two theatres were to carry on their respective operations:—

*Drury Lane Theatre.*

Mr. Charles Kean	.	.
Mr. Butler	}	.
Mr. Cooper		
Mr. Downton	.	.
Mr. Balfe	.	.

Mr. Templeton	}	.
Mr. Frazer		
Mr. Anderson		
Mr. Duruset		
Mr. Giubelei		
Mr. E. Seguin	}	.
Mr. Buckstone		
Mr. Compton		
Miss Romer	.	.
Miss H. Cawés	.	.
Miss Poole	.	.
Miss Forde	.	.
Mrs. E. Seguin	.	.

*Covent Garden Theatre.*

Mr. Macready
Mr. Elton
Mr. Bartley
Mr. H. Phillips

*(half of the season at Drury Lane)*

Mr. Wilson
Mr. Manvers
Mr. Leffler
Mr. Webster

*(who left in disgust)*

Miss Shirreff
Miss Land
Miss Vincent
Miss P. Horton
* * * *

Mrs. Fitzwilliam	.	.	Mrs. Humby	
Mrs. C. Jones	:	:	Mrs. Glover	
Mrs. Stanley	.	.	Miss Huddart	
Miss Charles	.	.	Miss Taylor	
Mrs. Ternan	.	.	Miss H. Fawcitt	
Madame Celeste	.	.	*	* * *
Mr. Gilbert				
Mr. Weiland			*	* * *
Miss Ballin				
Madame Proche Giubelei				
A full corps de ballet	.	.	A few dancers	
The largest and ablest band			A small and indifferent band	
The fullest and best				
chorus in London	}	.	A few indifferent chorus singers	
Mr. Grieve				
Mr. T. Grieve	}	.	Mr. Marshall.	
Mr. W. Grieve	}	.		

I will defy any unprejudiced person, in looking over the two lists, to deny that the Drury Lane is by far the most effective one, and the parties named in it better able to represent any sample of the drama. In comedy we were both bad enough, Heaven knows: in tragedy (the managerial cock's own dung-hill,) we completely passed him by; in opera and ballet, we had full treble his force, and in "scenic illusion" we laughed him to scorn. But then he was in possession of "the voice of the public press," (as before described,) and for the moment they who read, believed all they *did* read. What do they believe now? What does he believe himself? Why, what Rouchefoucault believed, when he asserted, "*Le vrai moyen d'être trompé, c'est de se croire plus fin que les autres.*"

## CHAPTER V.

Doubts respecting Killigrew's patent solved, and the hopes of a good fee dissolved—Liston's retirement—Mr. Percy Farren—An actor's want of judgment—Exemplification of the royal visit—The valuable contents of one house, and the valueless contents of another—Garrick and Mrs. Piozzi—Virginius, Caractacus, and other Romans—Mr. Otway and the other "rum-uns"—Presentation of a piece of plate—A difference of opinion—Restoration of the text of Shakspeare—Joan of Arc—Value of a tail—Epigram—Barry O'Meara—A dwarf—A painter's last work *not* his last work—Dependence on a play-bill—How to know the contents of a parcel before you open it—and how to tell a good lie.

THE rumours which had been at various times afloat respecting the existence of Killigrew's patent, some asserting that it perished in the fire of 1809 which destroyed Drury Lane The-

atre, others that it was in pawn with certain bankers for certain sums of gold—others that it never existed at all—were at the beginning of this season (1837–38) silenced altogether. The harpies of the Lord Chamberlain's office, with noses as sensitive for a fee as a ferret's for a rat, despatched a missive to Drury Lane Theatre to inquire by what authority I had presumed to announce its re-opening. It was not an altogether unnatural proceeding on their part; because, having done all in their power to render its opening a more hazardous speculation than usual, their consistency would have been at stake, had they not tried to prevent its opening at all. At the same time be it known, that the running patent of George III., granted in 1816, expired the beginning of September this year; and as there was a large sum paid for it, there seemed to be the prospect of another large sum being to be paid for its renewal. When informed that I opened the Theatre Royal Drury Lane under Killigrew's patent, I was called upon to produce it. I might have refused; because it was the bounden duty of the Lord Chamberlain's people to know of its disposition: but to prevent any confusion, I apprized the gentleman who waited upon me that its purchase from the Covent Garden proprietors was completed on the 17th of December, 1813, by the payment of a balance of £9,561 19s. 5d. due to them thereon; and producing a tin box entrusted to me for the occasion, by that valuable index to all such matters, Mr. Dunn, I displayed before the wondering eyes of the disappointed official the document itself, bearing the signature of "Howard," with the appendage of his lordship's ponderous seal of power.

A manager who is not an actor can have but one object in view—the honourable fulfilment of his engagements by every honourable means. Having no parts to study, and no parts to play—having no vanity to indulge in, and no personal ambition to gratify, he is enabled to devote his exclusive attention to the onerous and arduous duties of the cabinet, and if he does not, he deserves to be pelted. I have suffered much more abuse for faults it was alleged I had committed, than for any I ever *did* commit: but inwardly convinced that my desire, however luckily or unluckily carried out, was to advance the profession and amuse the public, I have been enabled for many years to afford a smile at the efforts of the petty rogues who have been spitting their spite at me. I endured much more of this precious contumely on the present occasion, than during the whole previous years of my management. First of all, because my opponent had procured "the voice of the public press;" and secondly, because I could not, with safety to the theatre, and with any feeling of common decency to the respected and influential

journals long established, put all the newly sprung up rabble on the free list, and thus secure their "voices." I was content, therefore, or, if not content, obliged, to submit to their abuse. I did not, however, let it deter me from my duty, or from directing all my efforts towards the gratification of the people. Amongst other pursuits, I was bent on securing, if possible, the services of Mr. Liston, (whose secession from the Olympic led to Farren's\* burdensome engagement there,) deservedly the most popular comedian, whose popularity has been made, and enjoyed, by a London audience. What talent has there been in the remembrance of modern playgoers, what is there, and what is there likely to be, at all comparable with this extraordinary artist? Who, besides Liston, is capable of setting an audience in a roar of laughter *before* he opens his mouth, and throwing them into convulsions after he *has* opened it? I have had occasion, in a former part of this work, to refer to the want of judgment† and tact Mr. Liston as well as most other per-

\* The various observations made on Mr. W. Farren in these volumes, have only reference to what I consider the ruinous nature of the demands invariably preferred by him; privately he is respected by all who know him, and by none more than his *quandam* manager, Monsieur Bunn, arising out of an intimacy of many years with himself and brothers. Though the insertion of the following letter may subject me to a charge of vanity, I prefer incurring it to the omission of so gratifying a testimony of the good fellowship long existing between his excellent brother, Percy Farren, and myself:

Wednesday October 1, 1837.  
" 46, Stamford-street.

" MY DEAR BUNN,

" I have known you upwards of eighteen years. On every occasion which brought us together as managers or actors, my experience has invariably found the courtesy of a gentleman united with the straightforwardness of a man of business. The destruction of the Brunswick Theatre, in proving to me the real goodness of your heart, also proved your personal estimation of myself. Circumstances prevented my accepting the proffered mark of (may I say ?) friendship; but it will *never* be forgotten. It is my nature to be deeply grateful for even a *show* of kindness, and my principle always to acknowledge it. In our present relative situations, the most suspicious could not suspect me of a *motive* in doing so. Though I have left the profession, I like now and then to see plays. That pleasure will not be diminished by the belief that the freedom of doing so is not sent by the *lessee* to a retired manager and actor, but by Alfred Bunn to his old acquaintance and well-wisher,

" P. FARREN."

† I will give the reader an additional instance of such being the fact, to the one cited at page 128 Vol. I. When Mr. Liston refused to play in *The Good-looking Fellow*, I wanted him to play in a new farce by Buckstone, called *The Christening*, which has since been so successful at the Adelphi;

formers are perpetually guilty of; nor will my admiration of his or their abilities be any bar to my expression of such error wherever I find it; but "the judgment must be weak, and the prejudice strong" indeed, that could deny to this inimitable actor all the humorous glories of his art. It has been a habit since this period, (1837,) on either theatre commencing its campaign, to circulate a report of the probability of Mr. Liston's return to the stage; but as his character is a guarantee for his word, I may as well subjoin a reply to an offer I made him to perform during this season of 1837-38:

"Penn, near Beaconsfield,  
"Sept. 14, 1837.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I gratefully acknowledge your obliging invitation to Drury Lane theatre, and also the very liberal terms which accompany your offer of an engagement. Having, however, decided never to re-appear on the stage, I am compelled to decline it.

"With mine, Mrs. Liston begs you to accept her thanks, compliments, and good wishes.

"Believe me, my dear Sir,  
"Very truly your obliged,  
"J. LISTON."

"To A. Bunn, Esq.  
"Theatre Royal Drury Lane,  
"London."

Early in this season our youthful Sovereign, having taken the drama under her especial patronage, gave it the countenance of her presence by coming in state to each theatre. Drury Lane Theatre may boast of having been the first place of public enter-

he refused, preferring the quieter but unattractive farce of *Pleasant Dreams* by Mr. C. Dance, in which he appeared twelve nights, to an average of 130*l.* per night, and for appearing in which he received 20*l.* per night. This was his ground of refusal:

"Sunday, March 4, 1834.

"DEAR SIR,

"As was said of '*She Stoops to Conquer*,' Mr. Buckstone's Farce is a barrel of gunpowder; and I do not deem it prudent, therefore, to commence with that: the failure of the piece would be the failure of the engagement altogether, a result which, I suppose, neither of us desires.

"Pray let the copyist send me as much of the part in Mr. Dance's farce as he has written out.

"Yours, &c,  
"J. LISTON."

"To A. Bunn, Esq."

tainment in which "the fair-haired daughter of the Isles" was received as Queen with the heartfelt welcome of hundreds of her subjects, anxious to pay becoming homage to one

"Good without effort, great without a foe."

The prices on this occasion were raised from the unrequiting standard to which they had been reduced, to the scale—no higher—at which they formerly stood; thereby securing the respectability of the audience, and putting about £150 more into the treasury than the reduced prices could do; and the following return of the contents of the theatre will let the reader into the secret of what Drury Lane Theatre will hold:—

Amount of the receipts on the occasion of Her Majesty Queen Victoria's first state visit to the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, Wednesday, November 15, 1837:—

			FIRST PRICE.				SECOND PRICE.	
			£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
Box, P. S.	.	.	43	1	0	.	.	14 0 0
O. P.	.	.	32	18	0	.	.	16 19 6
Pit, P. S.	.	.	65	5	6	.	.	1 11 6
O. P.	.	.	72	19	6	.	.	0 16 0
Gallery	.	.	46	8	0	.	.	2 0 6
" Upper	.	.	17	0	0			
			<hr/>			<hr/>		
			277	12	0	35 7 6		
Box tickets	.	.	246	19	6			
Private Boxes, <i>exclusive</i>								
of annual ones,	.	.	138	4	6			
Passes	.	.	4	11	0	.	.	0 15 0
Stalls	.	.	58	16	0			
			<hr/>			<hr/>		
Total	.	.	£726	3	0	36 2 6		
						<hr/>		
						£762 5 6		

The enthusiasm of the people seemed to admit of no abatement—their hearts were in their hands; and gratified by their enthusiasm, and pleased, as she condescended to express herself, with the performance, her Majesty imparted new life to the hitherto drooping scene around her. On the following Friday, the Queen honoured Covent Garden Theatre with her presence. On this occasion the immaculate lessee not only determined on no increase of prices, but by a dignified announcement of his determination, sought to disparage the view I had taken up to the contrary. *He* was bent, the good people were informed, on not allowing *his* prices to be raised, upon ANY PRETEXT WHATEVER; while *I* was bent on raising them to the scale demanded, and paid, on all preceding state affairs. Being curious-



to witness the difference of company the difference of price always brings, and to see how such company conducted itself before royalty, a party of us occupied a private box. A scene of greater blackguardism, of outrage, of the violation almost of common decency, was never known in a theatre—for, owing to the admission into the pit of many more people than it was calculated by possibility to hold with the slightest degree of comfort, a tumult occurred, in which the oaths of the men and the screams of the women struggled for pre-eminence; while the lessee, dressed up as *Werner*, was pacing up and down the stage in dumb-show, biting his lip and rolling his eye, amidst the internal workings of ill-concealed rage, Mr. Sergeant Eitherside, (Bartley,) having asked the permission of royalty to address the mob, was endeavouring so to do in front of the said stage.

But females were fainting, and males were fighting, and it was therefore necessary that something should be done, and speedily. All that *could* be effected, *was* effected; and a pretty sight, to be sure, it exhibited. Some gentlemen seated in the public boxes, *directly opposite her MAJESTY*, with the assistance of the police, drew up a breathless set of wretches from the pit, over the front of the boxes, into the lobbies, by which operation their backs were necessarily exposed to the public gaze as well as to that of their Sovereign—some fellows with half a coat left—others with a hole in the coat they had on—others with holes in their nether garments—some shoeless—some stockless—most hatless, or bonnetless;—and as these deficiencies became visible to the audience, they indulged in merriment at the expense of sympathy, and turned the whole occurrence into one disgraceful scene of hooting, holloaing, hissing, and laughter. A pretty mode *THIS of advancing the drama as a branch of national literature and art*, on the first occasion of the Queen of England coming in state, to enable the lessee to carry such commendable object into effect! It is impossible to conceive a more thoroughly blackguard exhibition—a more complete introduction of St. Giles's to St. James's, and one which, if it had no other ill effect, delayed the commencement of the performances three quarters of an hour. But the cry of legitimacy having been raised, was for the time kept up; and all these monstrosities which, had they occurred at Drury Lane, would have justly subjected me to severe rebuke, passed by without comment, or certainly without reproof, at Covent Garden:

“ Multi

Committunt eadem diverso crimina fato,  
Ille crucem sceleris pretium tulit, hic diadema.”

My friend Planché perpetrated an awful failure, at this time, in the instance of a play in five acts, under the fatal title of *Caractacus*. That he did with it all a man of his experience could do with such a subject, and one which he feared and disliked, is beyond a question; but in addition to that, he had to contend with some of the worst acting that could be imagined or endured. The latter part of the infliction was one not of long continuance, for it was "endured" but a few evenings, notwithstanding the introduction in it of as splendid a piece of spectacle, exhibiting a Roman triumph in all its glories, as ever was put upon a stage. However, all our dramas in connexion with this remote period of history have proved unattractive, save in the instance of the principal characters in them being represented by the "last of all the Romans," Mr. John Kemble, who supplied the place of gew-gaw by his sublime performance. I recollect the late Mrs. Piozzi, with whom I had the pleasure of being acquainted in the latter years of her life, confirming this observation. I was describing to her the representation of *Virgilius* by Mr. Conway, (at that time my stage manager,) in whose welfare she took a lively interest; and remarking that it ought to bring more money than it did, she replied, "I perfectly remember Mr. Garrick, somewhere about the middle of the last century, electrifying the auditors of old Drury Lane Theatre, by his delivery of two words, 'THOU TRAITOR!' addressed to *Appius Claudius*; but *Virgilius* was, nevertheless, the least attractive of all Garrick's performances." The peculiarity of the expression, "somewhere about the middle of the last century," delivered as if we had been of the same age, and in a manner with which one discusses the disputed date of a dinner-party, amused me the more as I was then "somewhere about" twenty-two, while the garrulous and delightful old lady was within a few days of eighty-two, having that morning invited me to the celebration of her eighty-second anniversary. These are delightful recollections, albeit the loss of those they struggle to commemorate is not likely to be made up by any existing associations.

The failure of *Caractacus* led to the renewal of a species of persecution I had long been subject to, even to a greater extent than the managers of Covent Garden and the Haymarket theatres, from a half madman, by the histrionic appellation of Otway. I hope I am as fond of a bit of fun as any of my neighbours; but between the ravings, the conceit, the ignorance, (as to stage matters,) the ridicule, the foolery, mixed up in his actions, there is no fun whatever. By birth, connexion, and education, I believe Capt. Hicks (his real name) to be a perfect gentleman; I have never heard the breath of slander pass over

him—but on the one point,—of the drama,—he is a decided lunatic. Yet, with the cunning for which all such unfortunate people are remarkable, he places you occasionally in a difficult position to deal with, by the adoption of an apparently sound reasoning. Mr. Otway has thrust himself so repeatedly before the public with the same luckless result, that he is a fair subject for examination. His first appearance before a London audience was under the management of Elliston, in his pet character of *Hamlet*; and owing to his disappointing the audience both by his performance and his non-performance, a young actor in the company, 'yclept Hamblin, played the part for him—memorable only from the circumstance of Elliston calling that actor into the green-room, and addressing him to this effect:—"Young man, you have not only pleased the public, but you have pleased me; and as a slight token of my regard and good wishes, I beg your acceptance of a small piece of plate!" It was beyond any question a *very* small piece, for it was a silver tooth-pick. I missed the worthy captain, after this occurrence, for several years, when in the year 1833 he perched himself one morning in my room, and favoured me with his view of London management, and his opinion of his own acting; and from that day I could never get rid of him. Though he failed at one house, could not complete his failure at another, and got thoroughly laughed at in both, still he stuck to me like a leech; and as mischievous persons were to be found willing to insert in some public prints any trash he thought proper to write, I at last became the subject of his scurrilous attacks. He then beset me at the stage-door, in the box-office, and even in the streets; and I have more than once resolved on sending him to some station-house. Finding his importunities thus far fruitless, he induced the editor of the *Observer* to insert this letter in his columns:

"TO ALFRED BUNN, ESQ.

"OF THE THEATRE ROYAL DRURY LANE.

"Saturday, October 28, 1837.

"SIR,

"As I presume you have now completed, with the exception of Mr. Kean, (prior to whose appearance some time will elapse,) the trial of those aspirants who seek for metropolitan favour as tragedians, in spite of the opposition you have manifested towards my employment hitherto, my services are still at your command; and as the line I would attempt leaves ample scope for such characters as, probably, Mr. Kean hopes to excel in, it might not be ill-timed for you to make the experiment of my ability. I should have no objection to take either

of the principal characters in *Julius Cæsar* for my *début*, to be followed by *Coriolanus*, grounding the value of my services upon the only estimate competent to determine them, viz., *public approbation*, having at the same time *regard to your nightly receipts*: not fearing that, could I once appear before you, our parting would be as unwilling as our approximation has been rendered unfortunately difficult. In looking to the opposition which *has been forced upon me in self-defence*, and from which, on my terms, *no possible good could have arisen to me* in which you would not have been the main recipient, (you cannot fail to see the redeeming quality, that my efforts *have been fair and above-board*;) and if I have been severe in my strictures upon *measures of a bad tendency*, yet I flatter myself you have no stronger partisan in any thing that admits of just approbation. I have thought this letter, for various reasons, to be the best public.

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"EDWARD OTWAY:"

He followed up this nonsensical public tirade by the subjoined private note, commencing with the familiarity of "Dear Sir," after all the vulgar abuse of which he had been so lavish; conceiving, evidently, that the failure of *Caractacus* had created a chasm that he was capable altogether of filling up:

"DEAR SIR,

"I presume you will readily comprehend the motives which have impelled my public letter to you in *The Observer*, viz., in the first place to obviate the difficulty of any acquiescence on your part by the *application* originating with me; and secondly, not to afford a plea that any *unbecoming compromise* had taken place on either side. If you like to underline me for *Hamlet* on Friday, which is to be played at the 'Garden,' I will do my best for you; but the notice will be so short, that you must not be disappointed if we should fail in a house; but please God, you would have another sort of one on the Monday. I merely, however, suggest this, feeling that you must be in some difficulty by the reception of last night's play; and I apprehend whatever I may do will not interfere with Mr. Kean, as it is his *NAME* that is to do you good in the first place, and because *Hamlet* could be at once got up.

"Yours, dear sir, obediently,

"EDWARD OTWAY.

"A. Bunn, Esq., 25, Bow-street,

"Tuesday, Nov. 7, 1837."

What was to be done with such an irredeemable booby on stage tactics as this unfortunate man? The public had conveyed *their* opinion to him; I had repeatedly conveyed *mine*; he would not admit the one, and thought the other prejudice. I therefore deemed it best, for the purpose of silencing him for the future, and to prevent the possibility of his few partisans laying a charge of prepossession against me, to give the opportunity he so doggedly sought for of appearing on the boards of Drury Lane Theatre. I did this against my judgment, and was determined, in conceding the point, to record my opinion, and to publish that opinion in the paper which had permitted Mr. Otway to favour me at various times with so much of his abuse. I therefore sent this reply to Mr. Otway's last letter, and a copy of it to his ally, the editor of the *Observer*:

"Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,

"Nov. 8, 1837.

"SIR,

"Without entering upon the question of your gross and unfounded attacks upon me, which I am told have from time to time appeared in the public prints, and are utterly beneath even contempt. I reply to the renewed offer of service contained in your public letter to 'The Observer' on Sunday last, and your private communication to me of yesterday. *You* believe yourself to be one of the best performers of the day, *I* believe you to be one of the worst; but as the manager of a theatre should never act upon prejudice, I will leave the public to judge between us, by announcing you for *Hamlet* as soon as you have entered into the necessary arrangement with me for doing so.

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"A. BUNN.

"E. Otway, Esq."

Instead of taking any angry notice of this effusion, Mr. Otway waited upon me at the theatre; and being aware of the kind of man I had to deal with, I requested Mr. Russell, the stage manager, to hear what passed, in order that no perversion of my remarks might appear in print, well knowing that he would not circulate what I *did* say. My worthy friend, JERRY, (the nomenclature by which Mr. Russell's admirable performance in the *Mayor of Garret* has long since distinguished him,) laughed immoderately at the interview, from the extreme placidity with

which Mr. Otway received the fire he had himself been the cause of being directed against him; and it ended in his being announced, under sundry restrictions, to play *Hamlet* the following Monday. One of the main limitations imposed upon him was, that he should on no consideration address the audience; knowing that silly harangues very often lead to serious consequences. He pledged his honour, and he violated his pledge; for on his re-entry, after killing *Polonius*, setting the audience on the titter, he told them the fault was none of his, for the scene had not been set for him at rehearsal. Certainly it had not that day, because no part of *Hamlet* beyond the scenes with *Ophelia* was rehearsed that day, a full rehearsal having taken place on the preceding Saturday. However, the curtain fell, and the audience fell too, laughing, hissing, and mocking, and heroically applauding, mixed with the genuine approbation of a few pitying varlets, who were witnesses of a man bred and born a perfect gentleman, and entitled to move in society, so lost as to come forward, and mistaking, or choosing to mistake such a scene for an ebullition of public favour, to bow repeatedly in acknowledgment of so much kindness. Poor fellow! Divested of this fearful mania, there is a pleasing manner, a gentlemanly address, and a melancholy replete with interest, pervading every action of Mr. Otway.

The spirit with which the lease of the rival theatre had been entered upon, now began to manifest itself in the most glaring colours, and was carried out in a manner not merely unworthy, but decidedly injurious to the administration. It was no secret that an opera, founded on the adventure of *Joan of Arc*, had been in preparation at Drury Lane Theatre since the summer; and it is no secret that a composition of this description cannot be hurried, like the painting of a scene, or the making up of a dress. Availing himself of this information, Mr. Macready became suddenly inspired with the idea of cutting my throat, (theatrically speaking;) and at a very short notice, as our labours were drawing towards a completion, he prepared and produced a spectacle under the same title, and precisely, of course, on the same subject. There can be very little doubt but that he had an object in view, beyond the mere fact of forestalling our production: and that object was to uphold, by means of a pageant, the performances which, without such a pageant, were deterring people from entering his theatre. Thus the very charge which had been levelled against me—that of placing my reliance more on pageantry than poetry—was negatived by the very party making it, through their adoption of a similar course of action. The humbug began to make its appearance in a very palpable light; and it was becoming

daily manifest that a positive outrage was being committed on the works of the great bard, instead of the homage so vauntingly stated to be paid to them, by endeavouring to render them palatable to the people through the medium of decorative matter, in the absence of even tolerable acting. As soon as it was known that the text of Shakspeare was only so far restored as to suit the purposes of the principal actor—that principal actor being the lessee—that the general talent of the company was degraded merely to uphold the said lessee—that more attention was paid to the *mise en scène* than to the acting of the bard's immortal legacies—and that the very principle the said lessee had decried in another he now resorted to himself, the worthy public, with every disposition to stand a good deal, could not stand that, and general dissatisfaction began to prevail.

The circumstances relative to *Joan of Arc* would not have occurred in any thoroughly dramatic city; the manager would have deemed such a trick unworthy of adoption; or, if he had not, the public would not have sanctioned it. The Drury Lane bills denounced it in the following manner—a more important notice, perhaps, than such pettiness was entitled to:

#### “JOAN OF ARC.

“A new grand opera in three acts, composed expressly for this theatre by M. W. Balfe, has been a considerable time in preparation; and notwithstanding any impudent assumption of its title or character elsewhere, it will not be produced until the necessary musical and scenic rehearsals enable the lessee to place it before the public in that manner they are accustomed to expect in all novelties produced at this theatre.”

A violation of one of the principal rules laid down in the first announcement issued by the new management—that of omitting all “outrageous exaggeration” respecting the success of their novelties, was now carried into effect; in addition to the invariable assistance of “the butcher’s cur” in the public journals. To be sure, there was no direct statement that the success of their new spectacle had eclipsed that of all its predecessors, that the audience were thrown into fits, and other such interesting displays: but the one word, *JOAN OF ARC*, was spread across the fly-sheet of their play-bills in letters, each of the size of a young coach-wheel; by which it was determined, that however illiterate the manager might be, at all events his *affiches* should be *well read*! Theory and practice are very different ingredients in the vocabulary of a manager; inasmuch

as the "theory" he contemplates before he opens his theatre, is invariably contradicted by the "practice" he resorts to after he HAS opened it. The confidence of the public in the new lessee began to be shaken—mine could not be, because I never had any; a similar instance of which I recorded at this time, with reference to matters of more importance, viz:

## EPIGRAM

ON HEARING THAT HER MAJESTY'S MINISTERS HAD LOST THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PEOPLE :

" 'Tis said they've lost by its abuse,  
Our confidence—but I'd be glad  
To know how they could ever lose  
What one amongst them never had !"

Different men adopt different ways of obtaining notoriety. Eady, Hunt, Warren, Turner, and Co., "have had their tithe of talk;" poor Cocking, in order to rise in the world, went up in a parachute; and Mr. Macready took Covent Garden Theatre to endeavour ("the attempt and not the deed") to prove himself a Shaksperian actor. Barry O'Meara\* records in his 'Voice from St. Helena' a favourite expression of Napoleon, 'Il regno di bugie non durera per sempre,' and the fallen chieftain never said a truer thing.

Would not a stranger, in perusing the following letter, imagine that it came from some extraordinary foreign *artiste*, who, having established a great reputation in the leading theatres of the continent, sought to reap a golden harvest from the exercise of his talents here? Would he not imagine that although the writer had heard favourable reports of Drury Lane Theatre and its manager, he was utterly ignorant, beyond those reports, of any thing in connexion with one or the other? But read the letter, and judge:

"Paris, le 3 8bre, 1837.

"MONSIEUR,

"Je n'ai que trois pieds de haut physiquement mais je possède une réputation beaucoup plus haute dans l'art dramatique comme mime exceptionel.

\* I very much regret that I never met Mr. O'Meara, after his return from St. Helena, but once; and that was at the table of Mr. Power the comedian. My eldest brother, in command of the *Mangles* East India-man, was attended by O'Meara at St. Helena, on his removal from Longwood, for an attack of dysentery; the virulence of which carried him off, despite the skill and attention of so able a practitioner.



"J'ai donné des représentations de pantomimes avec des exercices que personne n'a fait avant moi dans les principales capitales de l'Europe, et qui ont obtenu le plus grand succès.

"Apte à prendre la forme de l'animal le plus agile, chien, singe, ou chat, je suis parvenu même à paraître devant le public sous la forme d'une mouche, et, comme ces capricieux volatiles, je parcoure une salle de spectacle en tous sens. D'une bouquet de fleurs, je m'élance au ceintre de la salle, et tourne autour du lustre en courant sur le plafond.

"Différens auteurs des pays que j'ai parcouru ont composé pour mon genre special des pièces, des farces qui ont produit partout un grand effet et m'ont fait faire beaucoup d'argent. Je suis convaincu, Monsieur, que ces pièces traduites et arrangées pour la scène Anglaise, et surtout pour le théâtre que vous dirigez, dit-on, habilement, obtiendrait à Londres un succès de vogue. S'il vous convient donc de traiter avec moi, j'attendrai votre réponse à Paris, cité Bergère, No. 3.

"J'ai l'honneur de vous saluer,

"HARVEY IL NANO.

"P.S.—Les pièces que je monte ne demandent que pue de dépenses attendu, que j'ai toutes les machines nécessaires à mes exercices."

Mark the dwarf's expression, "le théâtre que vous dirigez, dit-on, habilement," as though he had suddenly dropped from the clouds, and heard by accident, by a mere "dit-on," of the management of the theatre! A few years ago this person used to haunt the stage doors of Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatres, and was occasionally taken up, on the sly, by some actor into the green-room, to favour the performers with specimens of his recitation in *Richard the Third* and other characters, his real name being Leech, instead of that of any travelled foreigner, and his father having been, if I remember rightly, attached in some menial capacity to one or other of these buildings. But the period of the year being near at hand when pantomime was to be put in full preparation, the manager was then, as he always is, subject to every species of application from professors of the marvellous, and he may consider himself a fortunate fellow if he escape even half the humbug that is attempted to be practised upon him. Rope-dancers, posture-masters, patent skaters, tumblers, strong men, flies, and fools of every description, tender their services for the celebration of this momentous event. Speculating on the chance of a pig, or a donkey, or live poultry, being required in the pantomime, and knowing that a shilling a night is paid for the use of such

properties, it is no uncommon thing for a rogue to turn dealer in such articles, and rear them in the hope of realizing a nightly profit by them. Master Leech betook himself to foreign parts, from the impossibility of exciting the wonder of his own countrymen; and having formerly failed to do that, there could be no objection now to his testing their gullibility. And thus it is, that a London manager, to have any chance of escaping purgatory, must have his eyes and his ears unusually open, watched as he is in all directions, and with so few allowances made for the errors into which he too frequently and unintentionally falls.

The production of the Covent Garden pantomime this year was signalized by the enlistment of Mr. Stanfield in the cause of "the drama's restoration." We had better, to prevent mistakes, give the announcement of this national event in the words of Mr. Macready's own play-bill:

"The manager of this theatre trusts the public will not consider it a deviation from the rule uniformly observed by him, if, in announcing the entertainments prepared, according to established usage, for this season of the year, he acknowledges expressly, and *particularly under the PARTICULAR circumstances*, his obligations to *Mr. Stanfield*. That distinguished artist, at a sacrifice, and in a manner the most liberal and kind, has for a short period laid aside his easel to present the manager with his **LAST WORK** in a department of art so conspicuously advanced by him, as a mark of the interest he feels in the success of the cause which this theatre labours to support."

Considering the many learned heads that were at this time connected with the cabinet of Covent Garden Theatre, some purer specimen of the English language might have been drawn up; but that is, however, a secondary consideration, when so important a circumstance as it records is duly weighed, it being neither more nor less than this: Mr. Stanfield, desirous of aiding the cause Covent Garden Theatre was labouring to support, at a sacrifice, and in a manner the most liberal and kind, "painted a scene in the pantomime!" "The cause" the said theatre professed to support, was the advancement of the *drama as a branch of national literature and art*; and to uphold the national literature, Mr. Stanfield painted a diorama! Bravo, Messrs. Macready and Stanfield! The reader having been apprized of the *apparent* cause, may as well be let into the *latent* one, viz.: that "the cause Mr. Macready was labouring to support," was to support himself by every principle

of puff imaginable; (Shakspeare having failed in his hands) than engaging Stanfield in the painting-room—~~ONE~~ latent motive: ANOTHER was, that hating me with his "heart's extremest hate," and imagining, from the circumstances connected with this scene-painter's secession from Drury Lane Theatre, ~~that~~ the said Stanfield had no holy love for me, he had thus the power of indulging in a double gratification. We will pass over the humbug of its being Stanfield's *last* work, until we come to his subsequent efforts, in the same "cause," introduced in *Henry V.*, and lay before our readers the rejoinder to so much nonsense which appeared in the Drury Lane play-bills:

"The manager of this theatre does not intend on the present occasion, '*particularly under the particular circumstances,*' to make any deviation from the rule uniformly observed by him, in announcing the entertainments prepared, of rendering every possible justice to the different artists engaged; and although he does not think the painting a few scenes in a pantomime '*particularly*' calculated to support the cause of the British drama '*as a branch of literature and art,*' he still begs to state that those celebrated artists, the Messieurs Grieve, have been some time past actively occupied upon a new, grand, moving panorama, (of which Mr. Grieve, senior, was a few years since the inventor,) on an interesting national subject; which the public will be delighted to hear, from the high estimation in which the talents of those gentlemen are held, is *not* to be *their* LAST WORK!"

Two brighter bits of absolute rubbish cannot well be put in print, the features of which may be thus distinguished: one was the exhibition of as much stage quackery as can be conceived; and the other was merely the exposition of it.

The diorama, however, painted by Stanfield on the occasion in question, was really beautiful; and lucky was it for Mr. Macready's individual want of attraction that it took shelter under the wings of this artist's genius; for, by the aid his pencil brought the Covent Garden treasury, tragedy could again venture to peep out.\* Until the introduction of his diorama, Covent Garden Theatre had been, on tragedy nights, in the situation the Manchester theatre was on the occasion of poor Sowerby's benefit, as related to me by himself. He had, by sundry visitations of inebriation, incurred the severest dis-

\* A humorous friend of mine, seeing a parcel lying on the table in the entrance-hall of the theatre, one side of which, from its having travelled to town by the side of some game, was smeared with blood, observed, "That parcel contains a manuscript tragedy." And on being asked why, replied, "Because *the fifth act* is peeping out at one corner of it."

pleasure of the cotton-spinners, which they marked in a signal manner, by keeping away from the theatre on the sole night their presence could have been useful to him. Just as the curtain was about to rise, Sowerby went up into the gallery, carrying a lantern at the end of a pitchfork, and stumbling over the only two individuals there seated, viz.: the fruit-woman and her boy, he exclaimed, "Don't be alarmed, my worthy people, I am come upon the errand of *Diogenes*, but with this difference in our pursuits—that he went about the world looking for an honest man, and I am looking in vain for any man at all!"

The play-bill under discussion incurred the designation of a "whoreson lying knave," from all Shaksperian commentators not then in the interest of Covent Garden Theatre, as setting at naught the declaration, at starting, of avoiding all "outrageous exaggeration." It reminded me forcibly of a dilemma I was witness of, many years since, in the cabinet of the late Mr. Harris. Poor Jemmy Brandon, of box-office memory, seeing a creditor nearing the theatre, went out to the door for the purpose of being accosted by him, and to the man's inquiry, "Pray is Mr. Brandon at home?" Jemmy, well aware his person was not known by him, unhesitatingly replied, "No sir, he is not." In a few minutes afterwards Mr. Harris sent for Brandon, and saying, "Now, Jem, what would you advise us to say to the public?" Brandon, after a very short reflection, and passing his hand over his face to denote his having come to a conclusion, notwithstanding that his whole life had of necessity been passed in the practice, deliberately said, "SUPPOSE, FOR *once*, WE TELL 'EM A LIE!"

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## CHAPTER VI.

Mr. C. Kean's appearance in London—A lecture on bad habits—Gar-  
rick's villa—Mems of a Manager—A change of AIR—Ferdinand Ries  
—Italian Opera at Paris—Severini—Mrs. Bland and Mrs. Jordan—  
What is in Bishop, and how to extract it—Stanfield and Macready—  
Murphy praised, *whether* or no—John Reeve and the Lord Mayor—  
Dimond ——— his life and death—His many trials—LENT, not paid  
for—The Lord Chamberlain *again*!—Mrs. Glover's fall from the stage  
—C. Kean's Hamlet and Richard—Three hundred guinea's worth of  
lectures—A Shaksperian prophesy—Seguin and Talleyrand—Un-  
published letter from Lord Byron—Barclay and Jackson—Magic Flute  
—A Roman Nose—Persiani—Boisragon—Morton—C. Kean and his  
father contrasted—Dinner and dessert.

I REMEMBER few instances of greater excitement than that

which preceded, and attended, the return of Mr. Charles Kean to the metropolitan boards. The *hiatus* occasioned by the death of his father, the futile attempts made from the period it occurred up to the moment in question to find a fit successor; and the written and oral reports, which had run through all dramatic circles for several seasons, that "the son of the man" (the appellation of the late King of Rome) was the only one by whom such *hiatus* could be filled up; the acknowledged vast distinction of habits,\* between the offspring and the father, more especially made manifest in the extraordinary instance of the protection bestowed by one on the mother, compared with the protection withheld by the other from the WIFE;—all these considerations combined to warm up the dramatic spirit, as far as it was capable of resuscitation, of the dormant British public.

Mr. C. Kean, during his long sojourn in the provinces, had established one of the first principles by which the success of public aspirants is tested, which consists of being invariably attractive wherever he went and played. Unaided by any of the obvious advantages of a metropolitan fame, Mr. C. Kean could fill the principal country theatres, while others in possession of those advantages could not attract people enough to pay for lighting them. His detractors argued that all this was only trading in the name of the father and in the amiable qualities

\* Do you desire an occasional day's retreat, good reader, from the turmoils of business, and for the enjoyment of "all-powerful nature" in the company of those who feel with yourself? Then do what I do sometimes—drive down in the cool of the day to Hampton, dine and sleep there, and come up in the morning. [N.B.—any day but Sunday.] I went there on one occasion with two friends, "learned in the law," and another sinful boy, "learned" in every thing: and while dinner was being prepared, we paid a visit to Garrick's Villa, and were kindly shown every part and parcel of it by Mrs. Carr, an intimate companion of Mrs. Garrick, and who at this time, and since her death had resided there. We talked of course of Garrick, after that of Kean; when on the old lady inquiring how Drury Lane went on, and my replying in a tone somewhat devoid of enthusiasm, she observed, "Ay, ay, you should do as Davy did—Davy never kept no bad company—have nothing to do with people of BAD HABITS!" Now whether she referred to the habits of poor Kean, or to those of my three friends whom she wistfully eyed, as she thus delivered herself, this deponeth sayeth not. I cannot dismiss the worthy tenant of this delightful abode, without letting the reader into a secret Mrs. Carr let us into. On inquiring how long the communication, passing under the high road between the gardens of the house and the lawn facing the river had been made, she answered, "Oh, Janson, he did that—Janson said to Davy, 'if you can't get over it, you must get under it,' and so Davy he made the hole:" and as her reply referred to Dr. Johnson and Mr. Garrick, we received the information with becoming homage.

of the son, and had no connexion whatever with the personation of the drama; while his friends more reasonably maintained that such adjuncts might be useful in a first instance, but that the repetition of such great success could only be obtained by the possession of great talents. To solve the question, to mortify or to gratify his opponents, (consisting, after all, only of those who were foolishly trying to uphold another,) and to carry out the judgment of his admirers, Mr. C. Kean entered into an engagement with me to perform a limited number of nights, at a salary of 50*l.* a night. Laying aside the fact, insisted upon in another part of these volumes, that "there is no harm in a guinea," there was an immense importance attached to the fact of a young man, bearing the name and having in his veins the blood of KEAN, being able to command a salary hitherto only given to him who first bore it. Leaving out of the question whatever quality of talent Mr. C. Kean possessed, there cannot be a doubt, had his salary been but fifty shillings a night, it would have been asserted that he possessed none, as, on the other hand, he had the credit for the gift of an unusual quantity, from the unusual terms he stipulated for.

My principal object being rather to chronicle the sayings and doings of other people, than to set down any opinions of my own, I shall leave any discussion on Mr. C. Kean's general performance to those whose business or pleasure it is to deal in the same; and shall content myself with such extracts from my own journal of memoranda, kept at the time, as may be illustrative of the season 1837-38. Mr. Kean had arrived in town to fulfil his engagement, while I was labouring under severe indisposition, and one of his visits to me I perceive thus referred to, which I take the liberty of classing amongst a great many others, under the designation of

#### MEMS OF A MANAGER!

*January 7, 1838.*—Charles Kean called on me to-day during one of my paroxysms of intense suffering—he's in an established funk about the result of to-morrow: it is momentous to him and all of us; but "funking" will only make it more so. He has good qualities in him, with a very gentlemanly mind; Eton has done that part of the business for him—he'll get well through—doing much himself, and we helping him with the rest. I liked some of his *Hamlet* when I saw it at Brighton in September last. "Is it the king?" will hit others, "I guess," as it hit me. Miss Charles, whose real name is Pettingall, has thrown up her engagement, because, at Mr. Kean's suggestion and request,

I put Miss Romer into the part of *Ophelia*, instead of her sweet self—*she'll* be sorry before I shall.

*January 8.*—Charles Kean makes, what may be termed his début in *Hamlet*, prepared with new scenes, dresses, and paraphernalia. His appearance and his performance elicited a degree of enthusiasm never heard of but in the case of his father; for he might truly say, as his sire said before him, "the pit rose at me"—receipt of the house, despite reduced prices, and without taking annual boxes into account, £453 10s. Though suffering from the effects of severe illness, I flannelled up, and went down to see the sight. A very earnest actor, with most of the peculiarities, (not the intenseness, mind,) and all the faults of his renowned papa. By perseverance, talent, and conduct, he has at length managed

"To climb

The steep where Fame's proud temples shines afar."

His fencing perfect—plenty of *foils* provided by the rest of the company. This play will run, and like some other things that *run*, will *draw*; which two isolated words are part of the favourite slang of a histrio's vocabulary.

*January 10.*—The Royal Exchange burnt down—the "whereby" not yet known—a thorough dismay in the city, but it will open the purses of many which are at present too full. "Blood, lago, blood,"—your citizen wants bleeding occasionally at least in his pocket. The wags say that a "solid change is gone to take a "change of air"—Kean fidgety, lest the attraction of his second night should suffer by the event.

*January 13.*—Ferdinand Ries, the composer, died at Frankfort-on-the-Maine. The last time I met Ries, was at the house of his friend Mr. Sharpe, North End, Fulham. Tom Welsh was present, and we sat in divan on an opera, by the aforesaid Ries, 'yclept *A Night on Lebanon*. Ries was a profound musician, but had no melody in him. He married Miss Mangeon, sister to the lady of that name, who appeared (and disappeared) at Drury Lane some years since. Ries was an agreeable, gentlemanly man, but not equal to an opera; his last, *The Robber's Bride*," was a miserable failure. He was an excellent teacher, but an indifferent impartor of sound, and there is a wide distinction therein.

*January 15.*—The Italian Opera House in Paris burnt down, the cause originating in some over-heated flue. There was a performance yesterday, (Sunday,) which accounts for it. Poor Severini would *per-severein* jumping from a window, and met that death he would have escaped had he remained quiet. It

will serve for talk to the Parisians for at least one entire month. Mrs. Bland died this day, aged 73; she married the brother of Mrs. Jordan; but the chances are, that those who never aided her living, are not likely to mourn for her dead! Bravo—"O would thy slippery turns"—what a ballad singer!—in appearance like a fillet of veal on castors—it was "vox et pretere nihil"—but *what* a vox!

*January 16.*—Ferdinand Ries buried at Frankfort on the Maine.

*January 18.*—I met Bishop at Mackinlay's dinner-table, and agreed to write an opera with him—two of the three to write, and t'other to publish. If he will but be HIMSELF, the stuff is still in Bishop; but trying first to be Rossini, and after that to be Weber, knocked it all out of him. The composer of *When the wind blows*, and the *Chough and Crow*, and *The Indian Drum*, and *Mynheer Von Dunk*, and such like things, cannot afford to copy any one. Bishop has a classical and gentlemanly mind, which is as rare as it is pleasant to meet with in any one whose back has once rubbed against the scenes of a theatre.

*January 20.*—The people are Murphy-mad, as well as Kean-mad. This, it was foretold, would be the day on which the lowest degree of the thermometer would be experienced; and it was so. They tell me that Macready has sent Stanfield £300 for painting a diorama in the pantomime of *Peeping Tom*—that Stanfield has retained one-half and has returned the other, and that Macready has caused the said other half to be expended in a piece of plate, to be presented to the said Stanfield. The two reasons why I doubt this report are, that I never yet heard of Macready giving away money, nor of Stanfield refusing it. This scene-painter's salary with me was £16 per week; and although his present work has certainly been the salvation of the pantomime and the season, there is some difference between *this* SALARY and *that* SUM—still, what with silver and salver, assistants, timber, canvass, paint, foil, flattery, and other ingredients necessary for the completion of a work by Stanfield, Macready must have paid pretty dearly for his Christmas pudding. Stanfield is a first-rate artist, but—but—is it not *Richard* who says,

"A little flattery sometimes does well?"

His taking up a brush, in opposition to the interests of Drury Lane Theatre, the cradle of his reputation, betrayed bad taste and bad blood, methinks; he was made too much of there, and others, equally deserving, made too little of.

*January 22.*—Murphy, the new almanack wonder, as true as



holy writ, thus far; if he continue to be so, his discovery will equal that of the longitude.

*January 24.*—John Reeve died in the evening of this day, at his house in Brompton. He was a diverting mountebank, but a confirmed drunkard. His great favouritism with the public enabled him to take great liberties with them: he was only fitted for the Adelphi Theatre, where a fine salary and a funk-ing manager completely spoiled him: he was born in 1799, and was therefore in his fortieth year. His acting was a striking illustration of the vast difference there is between a *farceur* and a comedian. Poor John was the *Bottle Imp* of every theatre he ever played in. The last time I saw him, he was posting at a rapid rate to a city dinner, and on his drawing up to chat, I said, "Well, Reeve, how do you find yourself to-day?" and he returned for answer, "The Lord Mayor *finds* me to-day!"

*January 26.*—Her Majesty visited Drury Lane Theatre to see Charles Kean in *Hamlet*—the house was a choaker—£463 3s. 6d. The Queen looked well, and, better still, was received well. Charles improveth by practice and patronage, and the loss of fear—it is literally a relief to see a *Hamlet* not resorting to the vulgarism of having a stocking dangling at his heel, to prove the distemper of his mind; and a greater one yet to find the grave-digger omit what was "a custom more honoured" in the *waistcoat* than the "observance;" they must be bad actors indeed, who resort to such trickeries to achieve a triumph over the language of Shakspeare.

*January 27.*—Heard of the death of William Diamond, which took place at Paris more than three months ago, and has been kept a secret by his friends, who, though they rejoiced at his decease, were ashamed of his existence, and *ergo* was silent. He possessed great knowledge of the stage, as his pieces of "The Foundling of the Forest," "Doubtful Son," "Conquest of Taranto," "Lady and Devil," and some twenty others attest. His last piece, I believe, was the *Novice*, brought forth the beginning of this season at Covent Garden Theatre. His enormities are said to have broken his mother's heart, and to have been the cause of his father cutting his throat. He succeeded that most respected parent in the management of the Bath Theatre; but was compelled by General Palmer, the larger proprietor, to relinquish it altogether in 1823; since which period he has been in many jails, (in Horsemonger Lane, under the name of James Bryant,) and tried in many courts, (he was tried at Croydon assizes under the name of William *Dimer*,) under many names, for heinous crimes—out of all of which he escaped by mere miracles; his deeds at Bath, the early and great scene of his profligacy, would fill a volume in the narration.

*January 30.*—By an absurdity in the legislation of the country, every theatre on one side (the Surrey) of the Thames is open this day; but every one on the other (within what is called the jurisdiction of the Lord Chamberlain) shut. Imagine any functionary having the power to take the bread out of some hundreds of mouths on a day when the chances are, he puts an extra quantity into his own. Well may they say, “the times are *out of joint*”—the actors are, at all events. “The smallest force constantly applied” will produce some effect, and I will never cease using *my* “small force,” until some relief is obtained by the abolition of this absurd bit of mummery. Buckstone has published a very silly letter in this day’s *Herald*, to endeavour to prove that poor John Reeve was not a drunkard—he might much more easily have proved that he was seldom sober.

I break off my mems for a few minutes to introduce the following communication, upon this day’s prohibition, which took place at the time:

“Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,

“January 31, 1838.

“Mr. Bunn presents his compliments to the members of his company, and informs them, that with the view of giving them full salary during Lent, a bill was brought last year into Parliament, at a cost to himself of £145, which was put an end to by the king’s death.

“He this year, with the same object in view, applied to the Lord Chamberlain to give the permission the said bill would have carried, and subjoins a copy of the answer to his application received from the Lord Chamberlain:

“Lord Chamberlain’s Office,

“January 24, 1838.

“Sir,

“In answer to the question contained in your letter of the 20th instant, I am directed by the Lord Chamberlain to acquaint you, that any performance of dramatic entertainments on the Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent, or in Passion week, will be objected to.

“I am, Sir,

“Your obedient servant,

“WILLIAM MARTINS.”

“A. Bunn, Esq.”

It has been seen already that Mr. Charles Kemble, Captain Polhill, and myself, advertised, in different seasons, perform-

ances for this day, and that we were; one and all, prohibited from giving them. Having paid pretty dearly in the last session of parliament for the introduction of some subsidiary law, any similar course this year appeared to me a ridiculous measure; and I therefore preferred simply putting the question to "the powers that be," to prevent either unpleasantness or expense. The reader has seen the result, and has, I presume, laughed it to scorn; it is hardly to be believed that, in such an enlightened land as this, an ancient usage of Romish customs should be kept in full force at the very time the parties who enforce it are endeavouring, in other respects, to make the people believe they are abolishing every trace of such formalities. The Lord Chamberlain will allow any gallimaufry to be exhibited in the minor theatres, on the Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent; but a reasonable and inoffensive performance must not take place at either Drury Lane or Covent Garden Theatres: but then, to be sure, as hath been already remarked, there is some consolation in their being *Patent THEATRES!!* a patent theatre, where it is supposed you may do any thing and every thing you please! I presume there will be a time come when we shall have another Lord Chamberlain with other and juster views; until we do, we must follow up the present one, until common reason—to say nothing of justice—be called in to his aid, and this foolish prohibition altogether abandoned—*mais revenons à nos moulons*:

*February 1.*—John Reeve buried at Brompton New Church. Thalberg, "le pianist monstre," as poor Malibran used to call him, visited me to-day—he is a handsome, unassuming, young man, and a giant at his trade; he was one of the many of her successful swains, and probably the one she was most attached to—for the time! Macready sick "of thick coming fancies, that keep him from his rest;" he was leeched this evening, I hear, after playing—he'll be bled more than that, if he remain much longer a manager.

*February 3.*—Mrs. Glover, the best living actress by many degrees, has had a fall from one of the Coventry stage-coaches, and is much smashed—sorry for it indeed—when she falls in reality *from the STAGE*, she will not leave a successor behind her—her line will be extinct. The Serpentine like a fair to-day; skating is surely giving away a chance—a worthless mode of closing one's career, conferring no honour on the ONE, and extracting no kind of regret from the MANY; and yet some eight or ten to-day had "*too much of water*"—here break we off again.

It is a strange truth, but "truth is strange, stranger than fiction"—that, ever dissatisfied with what we do possess, we are panting to gain more—passing over the sacred injunction

handed down to us, "In whatever situation of life you are, learn therewith to be content." Mr. Charles Kean had, up to this day, played *Hamlet* twelve nights without interruption, producing a receipt, exclusive of annual boxes, of 3,858*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.*, which makes a nightly average of 321*l.* 10*s.*; but, as if discontented with such produce, we prepared *Richard the Third* with becoming pomp. We stand so far excused from the charge of dissatisfaction, that the applications for Mr. C. Kean's appearance in that character were incessant at the box-office, and the result will prove that the public were earnest in their solicitations, and we were wise in our compliance. The recollection of the interest taken from the first, and maintained to the last, in the performance of *Richard the Third* by Mr. Kean's father, materially added to that which manifested itself for the introduction of the son in it; and viewed altogether, the almost incredible personal resemblance, the same peculiarities, many of the same tones, the same action, hereditary and not copied, all conspired to instil and to retain in the public mind the same degree of admiration.—*Nous verrons.*

*February 5.*—Charles Kean appeared in *Richard the Third*, which tragedy was produced with great care and expense; house 409*l.* 5*s.*; he will do fully as well, if not better, in this part, as he has thus far done in *Hamlet*. Her Majesty was present from the rise to the fall of the curtain, and commanded me to express to Master Charley how delighted she was with his performance.

*February 6.*—Received the subjoined note from Charles Kean; shall do all in my power to aid him, for two sufficient reasons; firstly, because I like him, and secondly, because I hate the pretenders who dislike him:

"DEAR BUNN,

"I cannot allow a day to pass without expressing my sincere acknowledgments to you for the great assistance you have rendered me, in producing '*Hamlet*' and '*Richard the Third*' in so splendid and magnificent a manner, which has been so conducive to any success I may have obtained; and my only hope is, that in the course of our future connexion, I may be enabled by my exertions to repay the obligation I feel myself under to you.

"I remain

"Very truly yours,

"CHARLES KEAN."

"Feb. 6, 1838, 30 Old Bond-street."

*February 7.*—Rejoice in the good fortune of my young friend

Georgiana, Lady Lyndhurst, daughter of my old friend Lewis Goldsmith; she has just obliged me with a call, on her arrival from France. Though an accomplished and deserving lady, it is not always that desert is so crowned, as to place on the brow the coronet of such an illustrious statesman and lawyer as my Lord Lyndhurst. I am a complete Murphy man as yet, for his Almanac has not been out as yet—rain again, and it is so.

*February 9.*—Saw Charles Kean's *Richard* again—a stirring performance from first to last—the rest I leave to the critics. Murphy right again, "rain and wind, and it is so! I shall ferret him out to-morrow, for the prosecution of a thought just entered into my cranium.

The thought in question, to which reference has just been made, was an offer conveyed to Mr. Murphy, through his respected publisher Mr. Whittaker, of three hundred guineas, to deliver ten lectures on "Meteorology," at Drury Lane Theatre; and for making this offer I was assailed with every species of abuse by the opposition party—on a pretence of my having proposed the same terms for a catch-penny affair that are given for a classical drama—the inference to be gathered from which is, that I would not encourage the production of such a drama, but was ready and anxious to give encouragement to a matter of temporary excitement. If this proposal had been made with the view of displacing more regularly dramatic material, I might have been blamed with some degree of justice; but, inasmuch as astronomical lectures have been delivered on both the patent stages, and on many other London stages, on the Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent, and as it was only on those days, when no dramatic performance was allowed, that such lectures were to be given, the manager must have been a fool indeed who did not try to make them as attractive as possible. But the trash and the nonsense, the folly and the falshood, which party spirit leads to, is inconceivable. I would not, however, have feared wagering any sum I could pay, that had Murphy lectured at Drury Lane Theatre on any night any drama was represented at the other house, by the united talent of all the London theatres, the receipt to his lecture should have doubled that of the performance. The reader has been already reminded of Doctor Johnson's celebrated line,—“Those who live to please must please to live,” and the more he keeps it before him, the surer will he be to go right in his judgment upon London theatricals. Now to our journal again:—

*February 12.*—They hiss Mr. King nightly for his performance of *Richmond*; and yet, I have Shakspeare's authority for putting him in the part:

“ Henry the Sixth  
Did prophesy that *Richmond* should be KING !”

A friend of mine called on me to-day, who met Mr. Lambton, Lord Durham's brother, at dinner yesterday, and Lambton told him that he was dining at the palace on Thursday last, and was talking with Lord Melbourne over Lord Mulgrave's "Private theatricals," when, the royal attention being attracted, her Majesty was pleased to ask what sort of an actor Lord Mulgrave was? "Oh, very bad, very bad indeed," was the premier's reply. And "So I should think," was her Majesty's gracious rejoinder. Her Majesty ought to be, and *is*, a good judge. Murphy out—so he was in not accepting my offer; but he gave me two reasons for declining it: his great timidity was one, and then the obvious necessity of letting out the secret of his science, another. A scribe by the name of Fox is belabouring Charles Kean in a morning paper—to judge by his writings, his name *should* be GOOSE!

*February 18.*—Seguin, senior, dined with me to-day; the opera lost the premier of its cabinet when it lost him. In terseness of remark, in biting, shrewd, and wherewithal polite, irony, he has no equal but—TALLEYRAND. He is a complete theatrical diplomatist. Murphy, the "weather gauge," paid me a visit; he is an extraordinary man, and though he has been out occasionally, my faith is not yet shaken in the principles he lays down—he is right to-day. As he came into the room all of a shiver, and exclaimed with genuine Hibernian accent and emphasis, "Gracious God, what terrible weather!" he seemed very much astonished at my replying, "It's your own fault, for predicting it!"

*February 26.*—Met Captain Barclay—"a thousand miles in in a thousand hours"—hey, and as fine a fellow now as ever,—and our "dearly beloved" Jackson, too, "the corporeal pastor and master" of the great poet, Lord Byron, at dinner to-day—he gave *us* the sublime chant (immortalized in Don Juan)

“ On the high toby spice flash the muscle,”

in his very best manner; and he gave *me* a letter addressed to him by the mighty lord, of which the following, hitherto unpublished, is a copy, and which I mean to keep as a prize, as long as “all this flesh keeps in a little life:”

“ Cambridge, Oct. 30, 1803.

“ DEAR JACK,

“ My servants, with their usual acuteness, have contrived

to lose my swordstick. Will you get me such another, or as much better as you like, and keep it till I come to town. I also wish you to obtain another bottle of that same Lamb's-Conduit-Street remedy, as I gave the other to a physician to analyze, and I forgot to ask him what he had made of it. Keep that also till we meet, which I hope will be soon, and believe me ever yours truly,

"B."

"P.S. I am this far on my way north, and will write to you again on my arrival."

*February 28.*—Attended a meeting of those foolish people called "the Renters" of the theatre—clamorous for their dividends, and as abusive as if I had them in my pocket. Their chief claim to such lies in the fact of the former holders of their debentures having sold to the proprietors their claim to Killigrew's patent; but as almost every purpose of that patent has been vitiated by the acts of government, the purchase may be considered a sort of fraud. They talk of meeting again on the 21st of next month, and if they do,

"Then I'll speak a little."

*March 1.*—Her Majesty having been pleased with Mr. Charles Kean's *Richard III.*, was pleased to come and see it again.

*March 3.*—Charles Kean appeared in *Sir Giles Overreach*, and, to my poor way of thinking, it is the best thing by far he has done. I see now the reason why Macready stipulated, in his last article of engagement with me, not to be called upon to act this character!

*March 10.*—We brought forward, for the first time in an English garb, Mozart's opera of *The Zauberflote*; and as a mere matter of opinion, regardless of what others do think, and not at all affecting what I do *not* think, I deem it to be one of the most perfectly "*got up*" affairs our stage has seen, being long and properly studied in every respect, and elaborately prepared in every department. That kindest of all kind contributors, Murray, presented me with a copy of Wilkinson's extraordinary work—one of the *most* extraordinary ever published in this or any other country—"THE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS," which was of infinite service to me. Who would be without it, that could attain to it by gift or purchase?

I bethought me at this time of the repeated and unjust attacks levelled at me for neglecting the legitimate drama, and the ful-

some compliments paid the rival lessee for his support of it; and I could not but contrast the causes which led to so much illiberality, falsehood, and injustice; for while Covent Garden was exhausting its resources in the preparation of Auber's opera of the *Domino Noir*, which proved an utter failure, Drury Lane was giving some one of Shakspeare's plays every night, backed by this celebrated composition, Mozart's *Magic Flute*, which completely filled the theatre! A perseverance in such reckless partizanship recoils at last upon the perpetrators of it—a lie too often repeated is detected at last, although it appear in print; because there are yet left in the world people who prefer the evidence of their own eyesight to the assertions of all the scribes in Christendom.

With a view, however, of redeeming past errors, a very praiseworthy, but not very prudent, step was now taken by the Covent Garden Manager; for the admirable manner in which *Coriolanus* was produced was worthier of far better acting than it met with. When the principal character in this noble play was represented by the late Mr. John Kemble, the people flocked in shoals to see it, notwithstanding it was unable to boast of any such excellent preparation. "Blessed is he that expecteth nothing, and he can never be disappointed!" Nothing was expected from Mr. Macready's personation of the noble Roman, and no disappointment was experienced at nothing being achieved. The play, therefore, brought Mr. Macready a great deal of credit, but very little ready money—it is preferable to have the two, if possible; but the latter is more useful in a theatre. There is no leading the public taste; the people are almost as cunning upon the subject of theatres as the persons engaged in them, know a good thing from a bad one, and will not allow their judgments to be perverted. James Smith put down a very amusing couplet on this preparation of *Coriolanus*:

"What various wonders does each scene disclose  
Where all is Roman, save the Roman's nose!"

But disclaiming all personalities, and indulging in no predilections, I cannot deny, and I will defy any one to deny, that *Coriolanus* was put upon the Covent Garden stage in a manner worthy of any theatre and any manager. As there has been a little hole made in the journal, we may as well take the liberty of filling it up.

*March 24.*—The Italian Opera—"I cry ye mercy"—Her Majesty's Theatre opened this evening, and introduced an exquisite singer in the person of Madame Persiani. She has a



true but thin voice, with an altogether unequalled style of execution; and, but that she is infernally ugly, she would go a great way towards pushing Giulietta Grisi from her stool. Boisragon (son of the popular Cheltenham physician) appeared in the part of *Rodolpho*, and succeeded well: he has an excellent voice; and is altogether *bien organisé*. Last season my worthy friend Knowles, with his usual good judgment and good heart, sent me this letter in Boisragon's behalf:

"Wednesday night,

"29, Alfred Place, Bedford-square.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I want you to *prove* to-morrow a vocalist, whom I think it would be to your interest and his to hear; as to his merits I say nothing more. Pray, by the kindness you have shown me—substantial—pray appoint an hour to-morrow, when he may present himself, and give you a taste of his quality. I am not trifling—I would not trifle with you. The more private the better, perhaps with a sprinkling of the orchestra. I request that you will send me your sweet response to-night.

"A piano will do. I am, as always, in earnest.

"Your debtor and friend,

"J. S. KNOWLES."

And in compliance with Knowles's wish, I had the pleasure of hearing Monsieur Boisragon. If his prejudice had not run in favour of a *débüt* on the Italian stage, I should have been most happy to have introduced him on that of Drury Lane; and whenever Monsieur Boisragon thinks of English music, and I *can* give him the trial, I will, for he has an excellent organ—Tati the most forbidding tenor in existence I should say—a very common *'taty* indeed.

March 28.—Morton, the dramatist, died at five minutes past three in the afternoon—never spoke after six the preceding evening—the water on the chest choked him. The last official letter I received from Morton, was on his retirement from the office of reader to Drury Lane in 1833; and, in returning me his pass-key and all MSS. then in his possession, he slipped in with them these few words:

"Eyes, look your last—  
Arms, take your last embrace."

"DEAR BUNN,

"This packet clears my cupboard and conscience. That

the clearance may be mutual, pray send me a farce entitled *Love and Agility*.

"Yours, &c.

"THOMAS MORTON."

"15, Store-street, July 3, 1833.

"A. Bunn, Esq."

Morton was a worthy and honourable man, and "a fellow of infinite jest." I liked him living; and I was truly sorry to hear of his death. Colman and Morton—well, we have but one or two more left of their school and times, and I hope they may yet be spared to us.

Mr. Charles Kean's engagement was now drawing to a close, and not merely for the vast contribution his exertions had been the medium of bringing to the treasury, but as a mark of good fellowship to the man, and admiration of the artist, his admirers were bent upon giving him a dinner, and something more substantial by way of dessert. I had the pleasure of undertaking it, and the pleasure of carrying it through; and the recollection at this present moment is as great a pleasure as either of the two former ones. Before entering, however, upon the reward he received, beyond his salary, for his exertions, let us examine the extent to which he deserved it. In the first chapter of the first of these volumes will be found a recapitulation of the receipts attracted by Mr. Kean senior on his *début* before a London audience; and it will be a matter of theatrical curiosity to contrast them with those attracted by his son on the present occasion. The difference, when all things are considered, will be found to be so trifling, as to be scarcely worth noticing; and the result will prove that while the generally high salaries of performers are, beyond any doubt, the cause of the total decay of the drama, there are instances when the payment of an exorbitant salary is not merely a justifiable, but a prudent measure, and if ever there was one instance more than another when it *was* justifiable, it was the present one. Between the 8th of January and the 3rd of March, Mr. Charles Kean played forty-three nights—twenty-one of them in *Hamlet*, seventeen in *Richard the Third*, and five in *Sir Giles Overreach*; and the following is a general recapitulation of the receipts, and the nightly average of them as well:

21 nights of <i>Hamlet</i> produced	£6,236	0s.,	nightly average	£296	19s.
17 nights of <i>Richard the Third</i>	5,516	14	do.	324	10
5 nights of <i>Sir Giles</i>	1,536	8	do.	307	5
43 nights,	£13,289	2	do.	£309	10

The nightly average Mr. Charles Kean's father played to was.

£484 9s., exhibiting an apparent nightly excess over that his son played to, of £174 19s. But it must not be forgotten that the prices of admission in 1814 were, 7s. to the boxes, 3s. 6d. to the pit, 2s. to one gallery, and 1s. to the other, and the half-price was in proportion; whereas, in 1838, the prices were 5s. to the boxes, 3s. to the pit, and 2s. and 1s. to the galleries, with a proportionate reduction in the half-price. That the reader may judge of the difference such reduction makes, a statement shall be submitted to him. The largest receipt Mr. Charles Kean played to was £464 3s. 6d., on which occasion seven hundred and seventy people paid to the boxes—which number, at 5s. each, makes the sum of £192 10s.; but had the prices been 7s., the amount would have been £269 10s., a difference of itself of £77. Then seven hundred and sixty-eight people paid to the pit—which number, at 3s. each, makes a sum of £115 4s.; whereas, at 3s. 6d., the amount would be £134 8s. In these two items alone arises a difference of £96 4s., which, added to £3 18s.—difference in the half-price to boxes and pit, makes a total of £100 2s. In addition to this, is to be taken into consideration that the father played only three nights per week, and the son played four nights during the greater part of this engagement; and that consequently, by a more frequent repetition, the attraction becomes somewhat lessened. Between the 8th of January and the 3rd of March the son played forty-three nights, as just stated, whereas, in a corresponding period of 1814, following his *debüt*, the father played between the 26th of January and the 21st of March, only twenty-two nights. The father in that period played *Richard the Third* ten times, *Shylock* ten times, and *Hamlet* twice; whereas the son played *Richard the Third* seventeen times, *Hamlet* twenty-one times, and *Sir Giles Overreach* five times. Thus in the same period of two months, though each of them played only three characters, yet, barring one night, the son played twice as often as the father. Weighing, therefore, all these things together, it will be found that in the outburst of their London career, there was but a slight difference in the attraction of either—a coincidence without any parallel in the annals of the stage. The management reaped the greater advantage from the exertions of the elder Mr. Kean, because his salary, for three nights' performance, was £20; whereas the salary of Mr. Charles Kean, for three nights' performance, was £150. But, as I said before, the demand of such an enormous salary is justifiable, when the attraction is such as herein made manifest: and while Mr. Charles Kean was thus highly remunerated himself, I never knew a performer more anxious that his manager should be equally so. It is a matter of notoriety, requiring little authority

to ensure belief, that good houses produce a good understanding, and a good dinner leads to its continuance; and as other good things were the result of the dinner in question, the reader shall have "a right, true, and particular account" of all that was said and done at it.

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## CHAPTER VII.

A splendid dinner, and a better dessert—Lord Morpeth and the Marquis Clanricarde—John Bull—Mr. Merivale—Mems continued—An actor's gratitude—Passion week, and how to spend it—Sir Hugh Paliser and Lord North—Chenies—Miss Stephen made a lady of—Theodore Hook and Captain Saunders—Shakspeare monument—A letter to that poet—Palace puppies—A lordly case of *pot versus* kettle—Lord Adolphus Fitzclarence and his parents—Mr. Benedict's opera and himself—A promising young man—Talleyrand's death—"The Derby," a *matter of course*—Fund dinner—Fooleries—Ducrow's marriage—Lord Castlereagh's duel—Waterloo honours—Soult and Duke Wellington—Greenwich—The Queen and the coronation—What the public paid for their fun—Louis Philippe and our foreign affairs.

It having been suggested that a dinner should be given to Mr. Charles Kean, and at that dinner a vase should be presented to him, in testimony of the high opinion entertained towards him by the subscribers to it, I set to work with the view of carrying the object into effect. Having, on my application to Lord Morpeth, obtained the consent of that highly gifted nobleman to take the chair, the difficulty of filling the tables and the subscription list instantly vanished; and long before the day of festivity arrived, the applications for tickets were sufficiently numerous to fill a room twice as large. The day fixed for the celebration was Friday the 30th of March; two days previous to which, when every preparation was believed to be complete, the receipt of the following letter threatened to derange the whole plan:

"Wednesday Evening,  
"March 28, 1838.

"Sir,

"It is with extreme regret and disappointment that I find myself compelled to announce to you, that, in consequence of a new arrangement of the business of the House of Commons, and the certainty of the debate upon Negro Emancipation, from which I cannot absent myself, extending over Friday, it will be wholly

impossible for me to attend the dinner to be given on that day to Mr. Charles Kean.

"I ought, perhaps, to have guarded myself more strictly against such a contingency, when I agreed to discharge the honourable office of chairman on this auspicious occasion. I was misled by the anticipation of other business in the house, and by my anxiety to bear a part in the tribute which I thought so well deserved.

"I am conscious, however, that almost all there is of privation in this matter belongs to myself. I beg to enclose my contribution to the vase, which it is intended to present to Mr. Kean, as a humble mark of my admiration for his talents, and of my regret that I am debarred from this occasion of giving it oral expression.

"I have the honour to be,

"Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"MORPETH."

"To A. Bunn, Esq., &c. &c. &c."

With that consideration, however, which is a distinguishing ornament in the character of Lord Morpeth, he recommended and aided my application to the Marquis Clanricarde, who promptly consented to supply the place of his noble friend; and, with this understanding, things went on smooth to their end. The dinner was the best public one I remember to have sat down at; and being given in the saloon of the theatre, it was necessary, in order to ensure its being served up "hot, all hot," to convert the spacious painting-room, with its large fires, into a kitchen. When the smoking viands had been disposed of, and a moderate quantity of choice wines, well iced, had been imbibed, the noble chairman, turning round to Mr. Charles Kean, who sat on his right hand, addressed him something after the following fashion—indeed, I may say, word for word:

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I sincerely regret that our mutual friend, Lord Morpeth, is not able to attend here to perform that task which, in consequence of his absence, has devolved upon me, because I know that he would perform it in a manner more honourable to you, more satisfactory to the gentlemen whom I represent, and more worthy the occasion; and that he would adorn the subject with those flowers of rhetoric with which his highly cultivated intellect and his classical mind are amply stored, but which I regret to say I cannot command. But I know your

kindness will overlook any deficiency, and you will not measure the depth of my feeling, and that of the gentlemen I represent, by the deficiency of my language, or by the value of the offering which is before you. At the same time, I trust you will receive that cup with satisfaction, because sure I am there is no tribute which you can receive, either from your friends or the public, which you may not attribute to your own merits and your own abilities. Perhaps one source of the high position to which you have attained, is the fact of your having entered upon your professional career with no circumstance of advantage that I can recollect or call to mind. The name you bore, the similarity in form, in feature, and in voice, which nature had impressed you with, and which proved to every beholder that the genius of the father was transmitted to the son, counteracted the indulgence usually manifested to a youthful beginner; but you have overcome all obstacles. You knew the toil, the study, and the diligence that it would require to attain to eminence in your profession—by study, I mean that diligent examination of the variety of delicate and almost imperceptible shades and tints of character, which our mighty bard has infused into all his heroes, so as not only to create corresponding ideas in your own mind, but to be able to convey those ideas to an audience, and make them feel and recognize the character which Shakspeare drew. In this you have succeeded, and you have raised the character of the stage, while you have earned the admiration of your friends and the public. It is a circumstance not only singular, but I believe unprecedented, that a performer should have appeared forty-three nights in one season, and played only three parts, and those old stock parts, so well known to the public that they would receive no gratification from them, except in the way they were performed." The noble chairman then referred to the estimation in which actors had been held in ancient Greece and Rome, and to the low condition of the stage in this country until its character was vindicated by Garrick, and sustained by the Kemble family, names with which that of Kean was well calculated to stand associated; and having acknowledged, as one of Mr. Kean's principal claims upon the respect and admiration of his friends, his unblemished integrity, high honour, and refined taste in private life, he concluded by expressing a hope that his honourable friend would long continue the ornament of the stage, the delight of his friends, and, above all, the pride of that surviving parent, who lived to bless him as the joy, the stay, and the comfort of her declining years.

The presentation to Mr. Kean consisted of a massive silver vase, of exquisite workmanship, the lid to which was sur-

mounted by a model in miniature of Roubilliac's celebrated statue left by Garrick to the British Museum, a cast from which stands in the rotunda of Drury Lane Theatre. It is not a little singular that, on the day of the dinner, Garrick's as celebrated cup (made from the even more celebrated Shakspeare-mulberry) which had long been in the possession of the late Mr. Zachary, was sold by public auction, at Christle's rooms in King Street; and the enthusiasm and good taste of Mr. Murray pointed out this relic as a fitting present to Mr. Kean on the occasion. But from the expense of the other having been incurred, and from its being at the identical moment in the theatre, the purchase of another was not feasible; and having been bought by Mr. Owen of Bond Street, he obligingly sent it to the theatre for the inspection of the company during their repast, as a matter of peculiar interest under existing circumstances. In the front of the vase that was presented to Mr. Kean were inscribed these words:

PRESENTED  
to  
CHARLES KEAN, ESQ.,  
By the admirers of his distinguished talent,  
at  
A PUBLIC DINNER  
Given to him in the Saloon of the  
THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE,  
March 30th, 1838;  
The Right Honourable  
LORD VISCOUNT MORPETH, M. P.,  
in the Chair.

The Complimentary address of the noble marquis, and the gift with which it was followed up, was thus acknowledged by Mr. Charles Kean:

“ MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

“The situation in which your kindness has at this moment placed me is the most arduous and difficult I have ever yet encountered. It would be unbecoming affectation were I to pretend that I was not in some measure aware of the high and unmerited compliment you intended to confer on me. I had thought and hoped that when the proper time arrived, I should have been able to express myself in terms suited to the occasion. The opinions and wishes of the distinguished company by which I am surrounded have been conveyed to me by the

riable chairman in a manner so unexpectedly kind, so flattering, and so overwhelming, that even a practised orator might falter in his reply; but lest I should appear cold and ungrateful, while my breast is throbbing with contrary emotions, let me entreat you to receive the language of the heart, in place of set phrases of studied eloquence; and believe in the sincerity of those feelings which, by their own intensity, have deprived me of adequate expression. The distinguished honour I am now receiving at your hands is one which artists of the highest name and pretensions have hailed with delight, when in the decline of life, and at the close of a long and brilliant course, as the climax of their honourable exertions. How, then, must I appreciate your kindness, young in years, standing almost on the very threshold of my professional life, my pretensions untried by the purifying test of time, the station I am ultimately to fill unascertained, upheld by the partial judgment of enthusiastic friends, and, above all, by a name which has been my most powerful introduction to the notice and favour of the public? I cannot and do not wish to blind myself to my true position; but I feel that an affectionate remembrance of the father has in your eyes invested the son with attributes to which he has no personal claim, and has placed him in a situation, brilliant indeed, and dazzling, but full of difficulty and danger. I shrink from the consciousness of my own inability to realize the expectations of those friends who have so kindly committed themselves in my favour; yet, to the latest hour of my existence, the remembrance of this, the proudest day of my life, will serve as a stimulus to unremitting exertion, and make me feel as if I had given a pledge which it is my duty to redeem. My Lords and Gentlemen, the place where we are now assembled is associated in my mind with feelings of hereditary interest; within these walls the name of Kean first became known to the British public, and the success of my father formed an epoch in the history of the drama which will not soon be forgotten. After an interval of twenty-five years, on the same boards, and by the same public, my humble efforts have been received with a degree of favour and indulgence far, indeed, beyond my merits and expectations, and which has engraven on my heart one paramount feeling of lasting gratitude. My Lords and Gentlemen, I will occupy your attention no longer. What I have said is totally unworthy of the occasion, and conveys but faintly what I feel. The conduct of my future life can alone convince you how I estimate the honour I have received."

The polite reference to the health of the manager, which called that individual upon his legs, enabled me to have a slap at the pretenders who had been using their utmost exertions, during



Mr. Charles Kean's engagement, to underrate him in public opinion. I told them that the reason of my having incurred the charge of neglecting the works of our immortal poet arose from the fact of my having been unable to find any talent, until the present time, qualified to support the honour of the mighty bard; and the enthusiasm with which that observation was received, convinced me that my hearers were entirely of my way of thinking. It was the more necessary to make these observations, from the incessant though vain attempts that were made by the partisans of Mr. Macready to disprove the truth of them. In addition to the coxcombical ignorance displayed by Mr. Forster, and the pompous nothingness of Mr. Fox, and the "full of sound and fury" yells of other barking and biting dogs, the cudgels were taken up by a writer of far greater ability in other matters than he displayed in this, and in an hebdomadal paper, whose general reputation for sterling wit should not have admitted into its columns any baser matter.

I will trouble the reader with but one short specimen, by a perusal of which he may estimate the rest. The subjoined few lines made their appearance in that Sunday authority, March 4, 1838, professing to be a criticism on Mr. Charles Kean's performance of *Sir Giles Overreach* the preceding evening:

#### "DRURY LANE THEATRE.

"Massinger's play of *A New Way to pay Old Debts* was brought out last night, in order to introduce Mr. Charles Kean in the character of *Sir Giles Overreach*. Not going with high expectations, we were not disappointed. We have already recorded our opinion of this gentleman's talent, and see no reason to retract it. Would we did: the public did not seem to go with him, as the phrase runs, until the last act, and then they were as uproarious as we were silent. The reason of the difference must be sought for in the 'strange passions' into which we are told *Sir Giles* has thrown himself about his daughter. It is only justice to own, that the audience relished the strangeness of these passions, as much as we marvelled at them. They shouted and hurraed—we sorrowed; sorrowed that Mr. Kean should lend himself to mere melo-dramatic display, where a genuine lover of his art would be absorbed in the serious and passionate, and leave them to speak for themselves in the effective.

"The house was crowded, and Mr. Kean was vociferously summoned to receive its congratulations."

It would not be a task of much difficulty to analyze the fustian contained in the foregoing remarks; but it would be difficult to do so with the acuteness which distinguished the annexed

piece of criticism on a piece of criticism: altogether unworthy of the name. It was written at the time, and placed in my hands; but not having been used, I have availed myself of the writer's permission to insert it, conceiving it is scarcely necessary to name the eminent author of *Orlando in Roncesvalles*, and the reviewer of Grimm's correspondence in the *Quarterly Review*, as the author of the diatribe in question. Mr. Merivale may not be offended, but cannot be exalted by any encomium of mine.

"A paragraph has appeared in one of our most popular weekly journals, by way of criticism on Mr. Charles Kean's performance of *Sir Giles Overreach* on Saturday night, of which it is difficult to pronounce whether the malice or the ignorance be most conspicuous. What was the exact measure of expectation with which the critic went to attend that performance—whether he did or did not meet with disappointment—whether having already recorded his opinion of this gentleman's talent, he saw any or no reason to retract or alter it,—these are questions about which it may be presumed, few people care; but when he goes on to assert that the public did not seem to go with him, as the phrase runs, until the last act, and 'then they were as uproarious as *we* (meaning the aforesaid critic) were silent;' when he farther states that 'the reason of the difference must be sought for in the *strange passions* into which *we* are told *Sir Giles* has thrown himself about his daughter;' that it is only justice to own that the audience relished the strangeness of these passions, as much as we marvelled at them, that 'they shouted and hurraed, *we* sorrowed: sorrowed that Mr. Kean should lend himself to mere melo-dramatic display, where a genuine lover of his art would be *absorbed* in the serious and passionate, and leave them to speak for themselves in the effective;' when such hyper-transcendental-germaine trash as this is attempted to be made pass for the language of sound and sober criticism, to the great disparagement, and eventual serious injury of a most deserving young actor, such strong evidence of the existence of a set design to detract and calumniate, it is worth while, for the sake even of the public taste, to expose the malice of an attack disguised under the veil of such shallow criticism.

"Now in the first place it must be obvious to all who are acquainted with Massinger's comedy, that during the four first acts, the character of *Sir Giles Overreach* (destined to burst upon the audience at last with an effect overwhelmingly terrible) is so artfully and judiciously *kept under* by the author, that, except for the announcement in the play-bills, and except for that marked superiority in attention to costumes and demeanour

which (at least on the English stage) is sure to denote the presence of the principal actor, the *Star* of the evening—it would be impossible for a spectator, unprepared for the catastrophe, to conjecture that this mean, proud, grovelling, heartless, rapacious, sordid, bold, unprincipled upstart is, in fact no less than *the hero*, as it is termed, of the play, the very title of which is derived from the fortunes of another, who appears at the outset to be the leading personage. It is only by slow and almost imperceptible degrees that the character of this most exquisite of dramatic villains completely unfolds itself, and that rather by occasional words and speeches, at long intervals, than in the form of continuous dialogue; and, during the whole of this (somewhat tedious) process, the attention of the audience is so closely kept to the development of a rather intricate plot, and the display of the several other characters by which the piece is diversified, as necessarily to excite something like a feeling of disappointment at the comparative littleness of the main agent, and the even subordinate part which he seems to occupy. Whether Mr. Kean did not, with the design of giving more force and effect by contrast to the hurricane of passion which forms the catastrophe, rather *underact* these previous passages of the character, so as to sacrifice some points which ought to have been rendered more prominent with a view to dramatic consistency, may be made the subject of fair and honest inquiry; but without pronouncing either ‘ay’ or ‘no’ on this question, we have only to observe, that, in the preceding sketch of what the actor had to personate, there is enough to furnish an answer to the sneer of our *Zoilus* about ‘the public not seeming to go with him, *as the phrase is,*’ during these four-fifths of the performance. Yet even through this least prominent and least effective part of the exhibition, to deny that he displayed much of the actors most consummate talent—as, for instance, in his dialogue with *Lord Lovell*, and in that scene of monstrous and almost unnatural depravity where he tutors his daughter as to the mode in which he would have her receive his right honourable lordship’s addresses, or to assert that it did not draw down the loudest but deserved plaudits of an overflowing and (what is better) a most attentive and discriminating audience, strikes us as the extreme of injustice and falsehood.

“We now come to the catastrophe itself, as to which we will merely remark, in the outset, that if the critic be at all well guarded in his criticism, then, not only is Mr. Charles Kean false to nature and probability, but every performer who within our remembrance has attempted the character, (including the father of our present tragedian, whose *chef d’œuvre* it was generally reckoned,) was equally untrue to both, and

the poet himself, too, the first and foremost of all the wrong-doers. If the 'passions' into which WE ARE TOLD that *Sir Giles* had thrown himself about his daughter, are, with reference to NATURE and PROBABILITY, fitly to be designated 'strong passions,' who is chargeable with the violation thus insinuated as having been committed? the actor? or the author, whose plain and not to be mistaken stage directions he to the very letter has followed? What is the actor to do, when the author tells him to 'enter *with distracted looks*, driving in *Marrall* before him, telling him that he is a subject only fit for beating, and so to cool my cholar,' suiting the action to the word, it is more evident by the context, drawing his sword upon his nephew *Wellborn* in the right honourable presence of lords and ladies, starting, 'overwhelmed with wonder,' at the discovery of the blank parchment which has suddenly frustrated one of his deepest laid and fondly cherished schemes of plunder and villany; rushing on his daughter to kill her, with the words—'Thus I take the life, which wretched I gave to thee,'—when she kneels to ask his blessing and forgiveness for her stolen marriage; defying to single combat the 'Lord,' whom he had designed for his son-in-law, with the courteous challenge, 'Lord! thus *I spit at thee*, and at thy counsel;' then hurrying off the stage with an invocation of 'hell,' to add, 'if possible,' to his afflictions, and finally, re-entering in a state of desperate lunacy, flourishing his sword in the belief that he is engaged in battle with a host of devils; 'rushing forward and flinging himself on the ground,' where he 'foams' and 'bites the earth,' till 'forced off' by the attendants. And all this scene of detected or baffled guilt, passion or frenzy, thus marked for performance in characters the broadest and strongest that poets ever penned, our clever critic, in his complacent self-idolatry, bids us observe that 'a genuine lover of his art' would enact as one '*absorbed in the serious and passionate, leaving them to speak for themselves in the effective*'—words, the true sense and meaning of which we willingly leave to comprehensions far more refined and sublimated than our own to develope; while we are quite content to have our ears split, like the 'groundlings,' even though the action may be termed 'melodramatic,' since we are too old to be frightened by nicknames, when it is at the same time such as is absolutely required in order to embody and give life to the poet's conception.

"To conclude—it is not the object of the writer of this article either to praise Kean, or vindicate Massinger, but simply to correct a piece of most unjust and malevolent criticism. Nevertheless, we must not do our young actor so great an

injustice as not to record our own deliberate opinion—which is, that whether the character of *Sir Giles Overreach*, as designed by Massinger, be, or be not, true to nature and probability, no performer within our recollection, not excepting the actor's father himself, has ever more successfully and completely executed the task assigned him."

But the dinner honours we have been recording, and the engagement which led to them, passed away with the utmost harmony, and Charles Kean left London for Edinburgh, full of good report. It gratified me to be of the slightest use to one with so much talent, so absurdly abused by those who had so little—it gratified me to see the domestic virtues displayed by an excellent son to an invalided mother so amply rewarded, and the receipt of these few lines gratified me as much as any other part of the business:

"MY DEAR BUNN,

"I cannot leave town without gratefully acknowledging the manner in which you have upheld me during my present engagement; and conscious as I am how dependent my success was upon the prudence and liberality of the manager under whose auspices my reappearance in London should be conducted, I feel that you have not only done all that was necessary, but more than my most sanguine wishes could have anticipated.

"I am aware that this is not a very substantial mode of proving my sense of your very great kindness; but fear that any other at the present moment would give to the enemy an opportunity of misconstruing the real feelings which actuated me to adopt that course.

"Most truly yours,

"CHARLES KEAN."

"April 5, 1838. 30, Old Bond-street,

"A. Bunn, Esq."

*March 31.*—Heard Persiani again: would that her voice were not so thin! but what a singer! The house looked very much like a meeting of creditors—jews, attorneys and their clerks, bailiffs and their followers, cyprians and their swains, occupying every other box, and full half the pit.

*April 8.*—Birthday—42! Plenty of room for reflection, but not plenty of time to make it. Passion week—no play, no pay; and if a man may not have a lark then, he had better "incontinently drown himself"—went for one on a visit to the best of all good companies, Allen, of Vache Park; met there the renowned Jackson, (Byron's pet,) and others who have

more than once "heard the chimes at midnight." This seat did belong to Sir Hugh Paliser, who, it will be remembered, caused Admiral Keppel to be brought to a court-martial on charges of misconduct (pronounced by the court to be "malicious and ill founded") in the action off *Ushant*, on the 27th and 28th July, 1778. On the admiral's honourable acquittal, Sir Hugh resigned his offices and command, and vacated his seat in parliament. It was HE who ought to have been tried; yet some people have their own and the devil's luck too; for, two years after this rascality, Lord North made Sir Hugh governor of Greenwich Hospital, and in 1781 he took his seat in the house as member for Huntingdon—Rowe's right:

"Heaven that made me honest, made me more  
Than ever king did when he made a LORD!"

*April 9.*—Visited *Chenies*, the burial-place of the Russell family. William the headless lies here, and I could name those of his descendants who will follow him, for whom nature has since done what for him the law did on the fatal 21 July, 1683; but I must be respectful at least in their own resting-place, because the representative of that house is ground landlord of the patent theatres—especially at a time when they are worth very little more than the ground they stand on.

*April 10.*—By way of passing an intellectual day, we breakfasted first—then dragged the fish-ponds, shot at the Guinea fowls with rifles, then lunched, hunted a cat in a cherry tree, pistol fired, then had a drive, dined, played billiards, smashed some grilled bones, demolished some beakers of punch, and then to bed. What a rascally mess of "good entertainment for man and horse"—but one didn't come into the country to read plays or to hear 'em, and if you had, TOM would have very properly put his veto thereon.

*March 14.*—Kitty Stephens married to the Earl of Essex, 82 *versus* 45. I do remember me that my lord was a member of the Drury Lane committee in the year 1815, when I first rubbed my back against the walls of their theatre. Kitty has waited with the most exemplary patience for her coronet, and it would be hard indeed if the "*finis coronat opus*" had not come at last.

*April 23.*—Invited to the Shaksperian anniversary at Stratford-on-Avon. Oh! the delightful days that I have passed in this delightful place, and with dear Mathews, and that dear fellow whom Hook wove into one of his memorable impromptu songs:

"And there's Captain Saunders  
Just seized with the jaunders,  
For fear that the monument should not be built,"

when we were all intent on building the said monument, the homage of the mortal to the immortal, as I think Sir Walter saith in *Kenilworth*—and they are both long since set out for the undiscovered country, and I am left crawling between heaven and earth—Saunders had in his possession, and I have had in my hand, a letter that must have been opened by the hand of Shakspeare. It was found by Saunders in the archives of the Stratford corporation, of which he was Chamberlain, and was addressed, “To my loving friend and countryman, Mr. William Shakspeare, at the Bell, Doctors’ Commons, deliver these” —’twas written by Richard Quiney, sealed with the same seal that is affixed to the bard’s will, and its object was to pray him for the loan of £30, to relieve him from all his worldly difficulties; there can be no question of its authenticity. We were, during this sojourn, paying a visit to the resting-place of the poet, when the darling old rector, Dr. Davenport, observed, “I was standing here with a party some months since, when one of them, a foolish, and, thank heaven, a very distant relation of mine, sprang up to the monument of Shakspeare, and, with the view of possessing himself of a relic thereof, snatched the pen out of the right hand—it snapped in two, and I fell senseless on the floor.”—Associations equal in gratification to those this unpretending town affords, are not to be indulged in, in any other spot under the sun.

*March 26.*—On duty to-day at the palace, and could not avoid a little reflection.—Alas! to think that the mighty realm, once the terror and the pride of the fair world, should for a moment be jeopardied by the foolish, prejudiced, and utterly incapable people who daily infest the presence-chamber of Albion’s Queen: but the Lady of the Isles, in the pride of her bloom and her beauty, and the joyousness of her own innocent heart, is too young to be enabled to fathom the world’s villany.

*April 28.*—Favoured with a long chat by Lord Adolphus Fitzclarence, who is one of the very best hearted “gentlemen of England” to be found in her broad and free land, and full of all good qualities. His habitual respect for the good old king, his excellent father, and the fondness with which he clings to the minutest recollection of his gifted mother, would serve as a bright example to most of the aristocracy amongst whom he daily breathes.

*April 30.*—Lord Londonderry abused Lord Melbourne in the House of Lords, in a manner something between Saint Giles’s and Saint James’s, for curtailing the CORONATION of its fair proportions. The Marquis is quite right; in all such matters the people think nothing of expenditure, being perfectly sure of having, or of believing they have, their fun for their money. If

it *should* cost an extra £200,000, divide that sum in the shape of an additional tax amongst the tax-paying population, and it will be found to amount to about three pence a head!!

In this month, the 19th, I had the pleasure of introducing to the public an opera, replete with beauty, from the pen of a composer whose retiring habits had too long withheld his high talent from being duly appreciated. No modern opera contains more choice *morceaux* (a grand desideratum for the English market) than "*The Gipsy's Warning*," by Mr. Benedict, and his instrumentation may compete with most of his predecessors. Though originally produced in this unmusical country, as some varlets call it, a work must have claims of a very superior order which, like this, has gone through the honours of translation and adaptation to a foreign stage. Mr. Benedict sent me this letter the day after the production of his opera:

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I am exceedingly gratified by your kind note of to-day. Such a testimonial is more valuable to me, as the success of my opera has been chiefly attained by your kind exertions, and the splendid and unrivalled manner with which, by your judicious management, every thing has been conducted. I seize this opportunity to thank you most cordially for all the proofs of friendship you have evinced to me during its progress.

"I remain, my dear Sir,

"Very truly yours,

"J. BENEDICT."

"93, Piccadilly, Friday.

"To Alfred Bunn, Esq."

—not inserted, in testimony of any compliment the writer was pleased to pay the manager, but to prove that there are those to be found in the world who appreciate the slightest attention that is paid to them. I shall know no greater gratification than in bringing forward on a future occasion any composition of so able a professor, feeling well assured that the pleasure I shall derive from so doing will be participated in by the community at large. Mr. Benedict is to the fullest extent what Sheridan\*

\* It was on the occasion of Elliston's appearance in *Charles Surface* at Drury Lane Theatre. Sheridan sat in his box, Sam Spring, the box-keeper, standing behind him; and when Elliston, at the sale of the family pictures, said, "This is painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller after his best manner, and is esteemed a formidable likeness," Sheridan exclaimed, "Pooh! pooh! what does the fellow mean? I wrote in his best manner, and not *after* it—a man can't paint AFTER HIS OWN MANNER—but he's a promising young man, Sam—promising young man." I had this from Spring's own lips.



called Elliston, the first time he saw him, "a promising young man"—indeed far more than this.

*May 9.*—Charles Kean returned to his re-engagement—he has been absent but five weeks, but in that time he has allowed those who *have* seen him to forget him, in the folly and fashion of a London season—after Easter—and those who have *not*, want to know if he is a fine actor, and keep back until *they're told*. There comes a new world into Babylon when this period of the year arrives—at the same time, nothing can be more injudicious than to break the thread and too often the chain of any thing, particularly if connected with public life. I doubt me if he will rouse up the Cockneys to any great extent until next Christmas hath waned, and then much will depend upon whose hands he gets into. He will, however, at all times do more than any of the dogs who venture to snarl at him.

*May 17.*—Talleyrand died in Paris.

"It is impossible that ever Rome  
Should breed thy fellow."

Heard an average anecdote of him five minutes ago. A creditor to whom the prince was indebted in a heavy sum, waited upon him as he was setting off on his last departure for this country—not to take so great a liberty as to ask for his money, but merely to ascertain any time, however remote, when he might presume to ask for a part of it. The diplomatist's only reply to the inquisitive intruder was, "Monsieur, vous êtes bien curieux"—and no one but the diplomatist could have made *such* a reply. Balfe's new opera of *Diadeste*, though possessing much graceful melody, had better have lain by, than lain in, for a smaller theatre—it is not stirring enough for this huge building—the people can't pronounce the name or understand the game, and the music does not much enlighten them.

*May 22.*—Talleyrand buried with great pomp in Paris. Another century will not produce another Talleyrand. I am not quite sure that our secretary of state for foreign affairs does not at this moment tremble even at his memory. Phillips' new opera appeared—to be repeated "never another evening until farther notice," say the wags.

*May 30.*—Went to the "Derby," as a *matter of course*, wherein there appeareth no alteration since I first attended the said "annual," some five-and-twenty years ago:

"Out upon time! it will leave no more  
Of the things to come, than the things before:  
Out upon time! who for ever will leave  
But enough of the past for the future to grieve!"

The "Derby" is more of an Englishman's holiday than any other celebration he cultivates—there be more of equality in it—the men who drive

"Carts with two-and-twenty in 'em,"

are as good as my lord's "four-in-hand" on this day, at all events—four horses are of *some* importance; but one donkey obstructing the road is of much greater.

*June 2.*—Present at the Drury Lane Theatrical Fund Dinner. Lord Glengall did the honours of the chair, Harley did the duties of the master, and the stewards did—the company out of about £900. The annual nonsense written by good Master Daniels, and delivered by good Master Harley, had this year a slap at Ducrow, and through Ducrow at me. Knowles took up the cudgels, and left the master prostrate; albeit Harley, in all the relations of private life, is an exemplary character, and an old ally of mine, whose excellencies it rejoiceth me to respect. These funds are now-a-days little else than inducements for performers to be more improvident and impertinent than their ordinary nature and avocation make them, and that "*more*" was not wanting.

*June 4.*—There was a time when one used to venerate this day, and that was when "George the Third was king;" but alas! all these pleasantnesses are passing away from us; and the worst of it is, they are replaced by nothing as good. The king's birth-day was wont to be a jubilee; but there are no kings now left to earth, that earth need care about commemorating. Kean's benefit—worth and talent well rewarded.

*June 6.*—Saw a piece called *One Hundred and Two*, in which Davidge played a part called *Philip Gabois* as well as Munden or Farren ever played *any* part. "Natur, father, natur!"

*June 7.*—Mr. Lodge's opera of *Domenica* won't do; he is a good musician, but not equal to writing for the stage—perhaps holds himself above it.

*June 10.*—Dined at Topham's New Hotel at Richmond, to celebrate Ducrow's matrimonial honours participated in by Miss Woolford. Slept there, for a particular purpose, at Ducrow's particular request.

*June 16.*—Lord Castlereagh and Grisi's husband, De Melcy, fought at Wormwood Scrubs; Castlereagh maintaining his ground, and maintaining at the same time the lady's honour like a *preux chevalier* of the olden time. How little do his political assailants know Castlereagh? who, in addition to a finished specimen of a nobleman, has ten times the intellect of all the fellows put together that descend to vituperate what they

cannot aspire to imitate. During the rehearsals of *Ildegonda*, last year, at the Opera House, Melcy, the husband aforesaid, called Marliani, the composer of the work, to account for apparent familiarities during the rehearsals with his wife. Marliani assured him that nothing of the kind had taken place since their separation, (and this was previous to her marriage with De Melcy,) but that he was quite ready to fight, concluding his expression of willingness thus, "Si je vous tue, vous serez un cocu mort; et si vous me tuez, vous serez un cocu vivant!" Monsieur De Melcy retired, and no more passed thereon; he is the veriest puppy extant, and the one he affects to love will bolt from him as sure as he deserves that she should. I was in the paddock at Epsom at the time that the elopement of the *ci-devant* Miss Paton made so great a sensation, and Robinson, the jockey, delivered a very appropriate opinion upon such subjects: "I'm not at all astonished at it," said he, "for these stage fillics were always terrible bolters."

*June 18.*—Invariably make a point of peeping into Apsley House on this day, to see the spread of plate in the dining-rooms, where the chiefs of Waterloo assemble on its anniversary, to drink to *their* CHIEF, the hero thereof. What a scene for a man to be proud of!—the world's annals hold record of no such character as Duke Wellington, who, with more to be ostentatious about, has less ostentation than any man, perhaps, that ever existed.

*June 22.*—What odd things happen in this life! Soult who, the republicans of France say, and the republicans of England are half disposed to admit, won the battle of Toulouse on the 14th of April, 1814, met the Duke of Wellington (who happened in REALITY to win it) at the Queen's Concert!! Those who doubt it, may refer to the duke's despatch, brought by Lord William Russell to Lord Bathurst, and dated Toulouse, April 12—true to a shaving.

*June 23.*—Dined at the Pitt Club in Merchant Tailor's Hall. To mention Pitt with the same breath you name some certain ragged rogues now in office is a disgrace to him who does it. The best general character I have read of Pitt is to be gleaned from the life of Wilberforce, recently published.

*June 24.*—Feasted at Greenwich. What a glorious place! the waters and all *they* bear, the hospital and the associations it bears; but then the heat, that nobody *can* bear. The *Trafalgar* is now the best house in Greenwich, and is worth going to, if only for the name. The stewards! (in plain English the actors) of the Drury Lane Theatrical Fund dined at the Star and Garter, Richmond (not a bad house to pick out) on the monies of the said fund. So, the public is to be taxed for a dinner, and sub-

scription afterwards, to find these mummers an annual jaunt into the country, and a feast into the bargain! It is high time this humbug was blown into "thin air," or greatly reformed.

*June 27.*—At the time I am chronicling these loose thoughts, I do wonder what are those of the Queen of England, who is to be crowned as such to-morrow? Our first maiden Queen worshipped Shakspeare, our lord of the drama, and our second one does all she can to support his temples. God speed her with the gift of that earthly crown she will be in the morning presented with, upon the due and becoming wearing of which will entirely depend its exchange for that heavenly crown "which fadeth not away."

*June 28.*—On duty at the coronation of Queen Victoria, in

"— the temple where the dead  
Are honoured by the nations!

as well as the living. As a mere sight, it is imposing enough,—the crown, the sceptre, the star, the dove, the robe, the ermine, are all smart gewgaws. But "uneasy lies the head that wears a crown," is written down by our dramatic prophet, and I be-thought me of the truth thereof, as I saw that hollow bauble placed on the forehead of our lovely and beloved mistress. My Lady Essex, who was but some yesterday or two back Miss Kitty Stephens, in walking up the aisle, coronet in hand, looked for all the world as she was wont to look in *Mandane*. "*Tempora mutantur;*" her change was in the fashion of her robe—that's all.

It having been the custom, before any of the present generation came into "this breathing world," to open the theatres gratuitously to the public on the day of their sovereign's coronation, that custom was adhered to on the present occasion, but with a somewhat important deviation from such antecedent celebrations: for £600 used to be given, but in the present patent cheese-paring days a deduction of one third was made, and the two royal theatres were required to open their doors for £400, or to keep them shut! The management of this affair was entrusted by some treasury trick to a Mr. Lane, a very civil and obliging person; but as I presume his own emolument depended to a certain extent upon his making the most moderate bargain possible, he naturally exercised all his ingenuity to effect a serious reduction. Like the fleas Horne Tooke dilated upon, the managers could not be brought to jump together, or a much larger payment would have been given to all. It is not to be denied that the sum in question was far beyond the evening's expenses; but it must not be forgotten that great damage is done

to the theatres on such occasions by the introduction of much doubtful company; and that the general festivities attendant upon the period, both before and after the one grand ceremonial, are very detrimental to the exchequer of all places of public amusement. As one of my objects in putting these volumes together is to make them serve as a book of reference, the whole process of this petty STATE AFFAIR shall be submitted, particularly as there can be little doubt but it will be looked upon as a precedent.

Mr. Lane having waited upon me, and given me to understand the amount that would be granted, requested I would send it in the shape of a tender, that he might formally submit it to the reigning authorities. I did so, and received the subjoined reply :

“ London, 16th June, 1838.

“ ALERED BUNN, Esq.

“ Sir,—I am commanded by the Lords of the Treasury to acknowledge the receipt of your tender and agreement to open the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, free to the public, on the coronation day of her Majesty Queen Victoria, for the sum of four hundred pounds, and to signify their Lordships' approbation thereof; and I am farther commanded to request you to submit to me, by Friday the 22nd instant, the entertainments you propose to give on that occasion.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ J. V. LANE.”

“ 4, Adam Street, Adelphi.”

In compliance with the request contained in the foregoing communication, the entertainments proposed to be given on the occasion were named through this gentleman to the general manager of the coronation affair, and their approval was conveyed by him the next day :

“ No. 4, Adam Street,

“ 23d June, 1838.

“ SIR,

“ Having submitted to the Lords of her Majesty's Treasury the entertainments you propose on the coronation day, I am commanded by their Lordships to signify their approbation thereof.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ J. V. LANE.”

“ To A. Bunn, Esq.”

The *Belles' Stratagem* and the *Youthful Queen* were the entertainments selected for the important occasion, on which every crevice of the building was occupied. The affair passed off as such things generally do; and on the 18th of July the subjoined letter came to hand, and on the 19th the business was wound up by the receipt of the money at the Treasury:

“ No. 4. Adam Street, Adelphi,  
“ 18th July, 1838.

“ SIR,

“ By command of the Lords Commissioners of her Majesty's Treasury, I have to request your personal attendance at my office as above, on Thursday or Friday morning next, from ten to twelve o'clock, to receive a certificate according to your tender, for having opened your theatre gratuitously to the public on the coronation day of her Majesty Queen Victoria.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ J. V. LANE.”

“ To A. Bunn Esq.

“ Theatre Royal Drury Lane.”

*June 29.*—What fools the people are making of poor Soult and themselves, shouting after him wherever he goes, because we thrashed him wherever we found him! Why don't they read the memorable manifesto issued March 8, 1814, by the old hound against Wellington and his country—“the saviour and the saved,” instead of coursing his heels through every alley of the metropolis, while he and his master (Louis-Philippe) are laughing in their sleeves at the helpless Lord——, who has got it all up, in the absence of any knowledge of foreign diplomacy. The venerable ballad comes in again:—

“ Ri tum ti titherum fit;  
I beg you'll never mention it.  
Not forgetting titherum high,  
A tailor's goose can never fly !”

And talk for a century, this is what in the long-run it will come to !

## CHAPTER VIII.

The end of a Season illustrated by Mr. Ducrow—Mr. Bunn sick—All sorts of Fishing—Spontini—Patent for opening, and Patent for destroying Theatres—Windsor Castle—Ducks and Drakes—Mr. Const and Mr. Munden—Walton and Johnson—Mr. and Mrs. Stafford—Lord Byron and the Dean of Westminster—Suborning—Infants Death—Harrow on the Hill—An Extraordinary Feat of Reynolds the Dramatist—Brighton—Mr. Charles Kean and Mrs. Charles Kemble—The Lord Chamberlain and the German Opera—Value of a Patent, and of a Chamberlain—Shaksperian Hoax—Wright's Champagne—Madame Albartazzi—The *Tempest* a mere puff—Horses and Asses.

THE season of 1837-38 having drawn to a close with so unsatisfactory a result to the treasury of Drury Lane Theatre, I was anxious to bring my connexion with that establishment to a termination. My rival seemed pretty much of the same turn of mind as respected Covent Garden Theatre, for he had relinquished the management towards the latter end of the season, which wound up, if I remember rightly, under the direction of the proprietors. The sag end of the season of a metropolitan theatre is literally disgraceful; arising from the total neglect of business by the performers, and the shameful mode of conducting it by all the mechanics and operatives. Ducrow once gave me a much more graphic description of the finale of one of his seasons than I have the power of transcribing. "I don't know how you find it," said he to me, "but as soon as I once announce the last few nights of the season, the beggars begin to show their airs. I went into the theatre t'other night, and seeing a prime little roasting pig on a nice white napkin in the hall, I told'em to take it up to Mrs. D——. The fellow said it warn't for me—'twas for Mr. Roberts." I naturally inquired who Mr. Roberts was, and Ducrow as naturally replied;—"Why, he's the chap as orders the corn, and I'm the chap as pays for it; so he gets the pig, and I don't. Then those b——carpenters sneak in of a morning with their hands in their breeches pockets, doubled up as if they'd got the cholera, and at night they march out as upright as granadiers, 'cause one on'em has got a deal plank at his back, up his coat. Then the supernumeraries carry out each a lump of coal in his hat, and, going round the corner, club their priggings together and make the best part of a chaldron of it. As to the riders, they come into rehearsal gallows grand, 'cause they've had all the season a precious deal better salary than they were worth; and at night they come in gallows

drunk, from having had a good dinner for once in their lives; and forgetting that they may want to come back another year, they are as saucy as a bit of Billingsgate." This is about the case with all theatres: and while the manager is blamed for all these ill doings, and most assuredly is the only sufferer by them, the real criminals escape unpunished. Scenes such as this add to the disgust a manager must perpetually feel, if he has any feeling at all; and in the state of mind arising from such sensation, I addressed this letter to the Sub-Committee of Drury Lane Theatre:—

"London, June 30, 1838.

"MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

"From circumstances to which it is now unnecessary to refer, and which no one can regret more than myself, I am induced to request that you will take such steps as you may deem necessary to obtain another tenant for Drury Lane Theatre; and to state, that I shall be ready to surrender the remainder of my term whenever called upon so to do.

"I have the honour to be,

"My Lords and Gentlemen,

"Your obedient humble servant,

"A. BUNN."

"To the Sub-Committee of

"Drury Lane Theatre."

The committee went to work immediately fishing for another tenant, and I went to Hampton fishing for something else, as appears by my journal.

July 7.—Fished and slept at Hampton. Oh! how I envy the calm retreat purchased by our great Drury Lane predecessor, Garrick, in this quiet village! From Richmond to Hampton is one continued route of association. Pope's Villa, Strawberry Hill and Horace Walpole, Clive's Cottage, Woffington's Grave, Bushy Park and Mrs. Jordon, &c. &c., crowd upon the memory, and make one in love with by-gone days, and disgusted with the present ones. Garrick's Villa (owing to Carr's death) is to be sold, but, being in the hands of the law, will be kept there until half of its value at least is eaten into by 6s. 8d. and 13s. 4d.! Mademoiselle Blassis, the Italian singer, defunct at Naples, according to newspaper report—back to Babylon to-morrow, Monsieur Bunn, if you please.

July 8.—Spontini, (composer of *La Vestale*, *Fernando Cortez*, &c. &c.) who brought me letters of introduction from Berlin, dined with me to-day. He is intelligent and gentlemanly out of his profession, and gigantic in it. His object in



coming to England is to make an arrangement with me for the introduction of a first-rate German company here. If I should re-open a London theatre, I would concert with him.

*July 17.*—The Vaudeville Theatre in Paris burnt to the ground. If *we* have a patent here for the annihilation of the drama, *they* seem to have one there for the annihilation of its temples.

*July 18.*—Mr. Charles Mathews and Madame Vestris became man and wife at the parish church of Saint Mary Abbott's, Kensington.

*July 20.*—Went down to Brocket, on a fishing excursion with that pleasant and gentlemanly brother of the rod, and patentee of chop-suppers, Mr. Duruset.

*July 21.*—Fishing all day from cock-crow until sun-down. Is it not passing strange, that a man possessing so delightful a domain as Brocket, to sustain which he hath ample means, should consent to take upon himself the government of a country for which he hath no means? But Brocket is a fine place, and Byron, my Lord, hath been here, and poor Lady Caroline!! And then its waters have noble fish in them; and it is too bad to abuse the man who allows you to pull them up—but alas! while *I* am catching fish *he* is catching men—men—men. England is going to the devil—let my lord go too, (an' he like it,) but let him leave my land behind him.

*July 30.*—In for it, once more. The committee have advertised again and again, and as they cannot convert any other reasonable being into a jackass, they are willing to continue to make one of me, and I to be made one of:

“ I am in blood  
Stept in so far, that should I wade no more,  
Returning were as tedious as go o'er;  
Strange things I have in head, that will to hand.”

But what fearful odds one has to fight against! Macready re-opens Covent Garden, and his followers have clubbed together a large sum of money, to prevent if possible, his becoming a loser by his speculation.

*August 7.*—Went to Windsor, and over the wonders of the Castle. There are few things amongst its “show” that have riveted my attention more than Sir Joshua Reynolds’ portrait of Queen Charlotte nursing her first-born with the fore-finger of the right hand extended, signifying “hush!” At this day it hangs in the drawing-room, where (then a bed-room) the said “first-born” (George IV.) died, and in the vault of the chapel, some rood or so off, the ashes of the nurse and the child lie together;

"And mourned and mourner lie united in repose."

Here's a pretty lesson for kings, and subjects too, if you come to that—and the blackguards will not profit by it. Look on that child's roseate face, think on his career, reflect how he lived, where he died, and where his ashes now repose! And doth no wisdom spring herefrom? No; we have all been roseate, lived, and shall die; and if we have not a royal vault to envelope our worms-meat, its remains will still be found, at the last day, as well in one place as another—when as Addison says, "we shall all be contemporaries."

*August 3.*—Dined at Blackwall with the London Directors of the West of England Insurance Office, and, in a room adjoining one in which we were assembled for the purpose of undergoing the same operation, her Majesty's ministers! After dinner, the illustrious individuals came out and played at the old school-boy amusement of "Who can throw a stone farthest on the water?" Nice employment for England's guardians. Imagine Pitt and Fox and Burke, and Sheridan and Tierney and Chatham, and even Grey, playing at "Ducks and Drakes" on the Thames; and this, with France having its own way in Africa, Mr. Van Buren with his eyes on the Windward and Leeward Islands and Canada, and Russia, with a sigh for India, backing them both. But if something be not speedily done, they will make "ducks and drakes" of this once "Right little, tight little island."

*August 12.*—Went for a day or two to Rickmansworth—dined with my respected friend Mr. Const—he is a fine octogénaire, "full fourscore years and upwards," but neither, as Lear says, "a foolish nor a fond old man," he *hath* been the latter in his time—he is now "a fine old English gentleman," hospitable and entertaining at table, and has always been a great follower and lover of the *ars dramatica*. He originally, on authority from Mr. Harris, senior, engaged Munden—THE Munden—at Covent Garden Theatre, for three years, on a rising salary of 4*l.*, 5*l.*, and 6*l.* per week;\* and now the vagabonds multiply these figures by ten, and then demand them per night.

*August 13.*—Angled the greatest part of the day—love the sport, preferring the opinion of Isaac Walton to the sarcasm of Samuel Johnson—one can fish and reflect at the same time—*id est*, have a fly at the end of your line, without having a fool at the end of your rod. Glorious weather—and did we know how, we should return thanks to the GIVER for the GIFT. In the churchyard of this good parish of Rickmansworth lieth interred

\* I have Mr. Const's authority for this new a-days incredible instance.

Stafford, so long chief clerk of Bow Street; and, among other virtues enumerated on his tombstone, he is stated to have made "the widow's heart to sing for joy." Dunn, therefore, proposed to "call on Mrs. Stafford for a song."

"August 15.—Returned to town—pretty situation for a manager to be in, not to know that you *are* one until a few weeks before you are to open house, and your rival having all the time beforehand to prepare "a rod your *to-by* to tickle." Motions made in the two houses of parliament to obtain some means of compulsion or of inducement, to make the dean and chapter of Westminster admit Thorwaldsen's statue of Lord Byron into the Abbey, hitherto negatived by them. This mummery of the dean and his dogs outrages common sense. Whatever doctrines have appeared in Lord Byron's works, tending, or so said, to impeach revealed religion, are but the imagined sentiments of those characters drawn by him, who would be likely to entertain them. But hear him when he speaks in his own person :

"My altars are the mountains, and the ocean,  
Earth, air, stars, all that springs from that great **WHOLE**  
Who hath produced, and will receive the soul!"

or if that won't satisfy the blackguards, who are the real sceptics after all, let them turn to the description of St. Peter's at Rome :

"Enter—its grandeur overwhelms thee not,  
And why? it is not lessened, but thy mind,  
Expanded by the genius of the spot,  
Has grown colossal, and can only find  
A fit abode, wherein appear enshrined  
Thy hopes of immortality; and thou  
Shalt one day, if found worthy, so defined,  
Meet thy God face to face, as thou dost now  
His Holy of Holies, nor be blasted by his brow!"

or a hundred such splendid instances, wherein his writings breathe a pure and deep sense of religion. How truly does Moore say, "Few are there of his passages, taken at hazzard, that would not by some genial touch of sympathy with virtue, some glorious tribute to the bright works of God, or some gush of natural devotion more affecting than any homily, give him a title to admission into the purest temple of which christian charity ever held the guardianship." This said *entêtement* of bigotry is only swelling the vastness of his lordship's renown.

August 19.—Met and chatted with the noble and obliging Viscount Allen, who recommendeth for special inquiries into their vocal abilities, the Misses Cundell who, his lordship reports are now singing at the Hague. Heaven knows that

operatic, and every other sort of talent, is much wanted at this present writing.

Perhaps the reader is not aware of the importance it is to a manager, his being enabled to take time by the forelock. During the entire month of July in this year, (1838,) my position was in a state of abeyance, for I asked the committee of the theatre to provide themselves with another tenant, and they were trying to do so. The interval between my declaring off and their declaring me on, was assiduously turned to account by the lessee of the rival theatre, and his efforts being directed rather to the impoverishment of me than to the enrichment of himself, the system of suborning was carried on in full force. Considering that, at the time in reality I had no theatre, whatever might be the general opinion as to what theatre I *should* have, no performer could be blamed for making for himself the best possible provision. But there is a way of doing things, which marks the character of him who does them; and although no one who has the pleasure of knowing Tom Cooke would think him capable of other than the noblest conduct, few of our craft adopt it to the extent he has carried all our dealings for a series of long years. At this time I received the subjoined letter from him which speaks for itself

“ 6th July 1838.

“ 92, Great Portland Street.

“ MY DEAR SIR.

“ An offer has been made to me from Covent Garden Theatre of such a nature as (under existing circumstances) it would be most imprudent to refuse; the duties required of me being so very light, as to be in every respect compatible with other branches of professional pursuits which I have long meditated adopting, and which the responsibility of my station at Drury Lane Theatre has hitherto prevented my entering into.

“ I beg to assure you that *not the slightest feeling of hostility towards you* has induced me to this change, which, in all probability, you may not care about; still I wish you *to be first informed of it* from myself.

“ Wishing to be explicit, I may as well add, that one of the undertakings alluded to in the beginning of this letter is a vocal academy on a large scale, the necessity of my attendance on which would render it impossible for me to command any thing like the time I have hitherto devoted to a theatre.

“ Believe me to remain

“ Very truly yours,

“ T. COOKE.”

“ To Alfred Bunn, Esq.”

A man must have been a blockhead who could have raised a point of objection to so straightforward an intimation; and I wished him then, as I shall ever continue to wish him, the reward which high merit and high character are pre-eminently entitled to. What possible chance could there be for a manager entering upon his duties at the eleventh hour, previous to the arrival of which his adversary had been making ahead by every exertion he was capable of, and those exertions backed by a private subscription to defray his contingencies, or, in the event of a loss, to pay his deficiencies. I beg not to be understood as seeking to impeach, for one moment, my rival's pecuniary punctilio; for, knowing one instance in the case of a member of parliament where his contribution of £50 was ultimately returned, I have not the shadow of a doubt, that every *sou*, whether in the shape of service or hard cash, which was tendered to Covent Garden Theatre, was scrupulously paid back again. Still such aid is very timely, especially when the experience of a past season does not make a man very much in love with this kind of undertaking. But I must see what my journal is registering all this while.

*August 20.*—Lafont, the French tenor singer, defunct at Paris—it was *his* talent that used always to keep Nourrit in check. He was a remarkably gentlemanly man, and when he and I used to pistol-shoot in the *Champs Elysées*—two years are now departed—I little thought he was so soon to set out on “the long journey.”

*August 21.*—Went on a pilgrimage to Harrow on the Hill, to sit on the tombstone (Peachey's) under the elm where Lord Byron “used to sit for hours and hours when a schoolboy,” as he himself expresses it. The wife of the sexton, who has been there thirty-seven years, saith she knew the poet well, and often brought him hot water for his tea under the said elm. Allegra, his illegitimate daughter, is buried where he wished, inside the church; but the vicar would not allow the tablet the bard desired to be put up, because it was setting an immoral lesson to the boys!! The old sextoness showed me, inside the west door, (it having been blown by a recent storm from the grave it long presided over,) the monumental wooden rail of one “Isaac Greentree, who departed this life in August 1800,” on which, when a schoolboy, the noble bard wrote as follows:

“There'll be a time when the green trees shall fall,  
And Isaac Greentree rise above them all!”

His after writings have no finer thought in them, despite every Dean that Westminster ever spermed.

*August 22.*—My old and valued friend, my reader of plays and thinker-general, Reynolds the “dramatic wight,” dined with me at Brompton—a feast I believe he has not accomplished elsewhere these dozen or fifteen years past. Reynolds’ humour is undying—neither age nor infirmity having impaired its brilliancy one iota; and I look upon this day with more real delight, and shall anticipate a recurrence of that delight, with more satisfaction, than most others in the kalends.

*August 24.*—Left town for Brighton, which one had better do, even with Drury Lane on your shoulders, than crawl about the tenantless streets and empty parks of the metropolis; besides, I mean Mr. Mahomed and his baths to open their batteries on my kidneys, and to *gravel* the enemy therein congregated; another “besides,” which is, that I mean to produce *Gulilaume Tell* as Rossini wrote it, and I mean Monsieur Bunn to adapt it.

*August 25.*—Domiciled at Brighton, where to-day the rain and wind are “wild and high,” but there is a charm in their “fierce and far delight” which a brace of tempests and double as many hurricanes could not display in human city.

*August 27.*—When one thinks what Brighton *was*, and what it now *is*, it is difficult to reconcile to the mind the idea of Queen Elizabeth’s “goode fyshinge towne of Brightelmstone, contayninge seventeen houses and thereanent.” The sea has made it; and what is there that man is suffered to gaze upon, which can be compared to

“The sea, the sea, the open sea?”

so nobly and boldly sung by Barry Cornwall, whom I long to immolate whenever I see him, for allowing his dramatic laurels to repose on the monument of *Mirandola*. Always, if possible, when at Brighton, or elsewhere in the vicinity of the sea, contrive to be housed in front of it. In storm or sunshine, it is beautiful to look upon; and though all reflection thereon makes us more and more convinced of our own insignificance, it inspires us with the wish to exalt ourselves. It occurreth to me I shall never swim therein again, unless this malady of mine mendeth. Cigar’d upon the chain-pier till moon-down, praising man for his ingenuity, and thankful to his Maker for permitting him to exercise it. Charles Kean called on me, and says the people patronise him here to the tune of £300 clear in seven nights, which is at least three times as much as the mummery of his opponents can collect together in that same time.

*August 30.*—Saw Charles Kean perform *Claude Melnotte*

in Sir E. Bulwer's drama of *The Lady of Lyons*. A more red-hot Port St. Martin, Surry, Coburg, or what you will, melodrama was never seen. It contains, amidst some good situations unskilfully worked up, and amongst some admirable ideas bombastically expressed, as much sheer nonsense as was ever palmed on reader or spectator. A man who writes a bad play, and yet asks £500 for it, should be avoided (at all event sby managers) by public proclamation.

*September 3.*—Mrs. Charles Kemble died at Chertsey, in a cottage left to her husband—I believe—by his sister Mrs. Whitelock. Went back to town in Ducrow's phaeton, and arriving at Astley's by half past eight, staid there to see the lion exhibition of Mr. Van Amburgh, which, incredible as it may appear, has brought to pass the words of the prophet, "And the lion, and the lamb, and the leopard, shall lie down together."

Having some pages back introduced my reader to the Chevalier Spontini, I shall have the pleasure of making him better acquainted with that celebrated composer; and having all along made him acquainted with the peculiar pleasures of a *patent* theatre, I will exemplify them a little more. I readily fell into Spontini's view of the subject of a German opera, from the success it met with at Drury Lane in the year 1833; and during his sojourn in London he employed his time in making many necessary and preliminary arrangements. He had interviews with some members of the royal family, with the representative at this court, of the court he was employed by, Baron Bulow, and with the Lord Chamberlain; and he then addressed me a business letter, in reply to a proposition I had made him, in which I laid down the expense of introducing such a company as he pointed out, at £6,000—five hundred of which was to be his own remuneration:

"MONSIEUR,

"Sans pouvoir vous le dire *au juste*, votre plan me semble pouvoir s'exécuter avec succès, moyennant ce que nous pourrions y ajouter de facilités pour aplanir toutes les difficultés et le meilleur moyen pour tous les Allemands sera celui de leur assurer l'exactitude des paymens par une garantie qu'il exigent tous. Quant à moi, vous m'offrez sans doute ce que vous pouvez, qui vous semblera peut-être beaucoup; mais moi, je le trouve modique! Il faut mieux nous expliquer sur ce sujet, si outre la *direction générale* dont je serai chargé, je donnerai encore la représentation trois grand operas de moi, inconnu à Londres, et dont un connu seulement à Berlin, *Nourmahal*, parceque je n'ai jamais voulu le donner en parti-

tion à aucun autre théâtre; il est par conséquent nouveau pour l'Angleterre, la France, l'Italie, &c.

"Comment voulez-vous donc que ces trois grands operas ne me rapportent rien, et que je ne sois recompensé que comme *simple directeur* de musique et des operas, comme tous vos directeurs d'orchestre des théâtres de Londres?

"Je partirai d'ici Mardi matin; demain, dimanche, et lundi, je serai à vos ordres, si vous volez m'écrire l'heure *au juste* à laquelle vous *pourriez vous rendre chez moi*, ne pouvant plus m'absenter de mon logement par les grands préparatifs de mon départ.

"Mille complimens et amitiés,

"SPONTINI.

"24 Août, 1838."

"On the evening preceding his departure, we finally settled our terms by my making an advance of just double in the remuneration allotted to himself, for the privilege of bringing forth his three operas in question. At this last interview he told me that the Marquis Conyngham had promised him a license for the German operas; and therefore, notwithstanding I conceived myself to possess, in the patent of Drury Lane, the power to give such entertainments, (having so done without let or hindrance in 1833) I deemed it advisable to see the Lord Chamberlain, that the interests of one party might not clash with those of another. His lordship wished me to define in writing my views relative to the Chevalier Spontini, and, on my doing so, a letter was despatched to him instanter to Paris from the Chamberlain's office, saying that all performances otherwise than English were prohibited at Drury Lane, as will be shown by the Chevalier's own letter:

No. 1.

"Paris, 18 Août, 1838.

"Monsieur,

"Une lettre du 8 courant que j'ai reçu ici de la part du Lord Chambellan de Conyngham, bient parализer toutes mes operations relatives à l'établissement à Londres de l'opera Allemand, ainsi que nous en étions convenus. L'on m'annonce que tout spectacle autre que l'Anglais est expressement prohibé à votre théâtre de Drury Lane: et que toutes les demandes faites pour des spectacles étrangers, notamment l'Allemand, ont été refusées, et que s'il y aura une communication quelconque à me faire à ce sujet, l'on s'empressera de me l'expedier tout ceci je le savais d'avance, et il me semble que c'est un refus decisif.

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Par conséquent, j'attendrai encore de votre part, Monsieur, une *réponse définitive* ici à Paris jusqu'au 30 courant, et après je partirai pour l'Italie. Si vous obtenez la dite permission pour l'opéra Allemand, suivant nos conventions, vous pourrez vous entendre avec moi ici à Paris, rue du Mail, No. 13, jusqu'au 30 du courant, et avec M. Röckel, qui correspond en mon nom avec Madame Devrient; et avant mon départ de Paris je vous écrirai encore, si vous répondez promptement à la présente. Jus ques à une décision et à la permission obtenue pour l'opéra Allemand à Londres, je suis forcé de suspendre toutes les opérations, afin de ne pas compromettre. J'attendrai donc votre réponse.

"J'ai l'honneur d'être, avec une parfait estime,

"Monsieur,

"Votre très dévoué,

"SPONTINI."

"Entendez-vous donc avec Mr. De Bignis pour mettre ensemble l'opéra Italien et l'Allemand. Les gazettes annoncent qu'il prendrai l'opéra Italien à la place de Laporte.

"Paris, rue du Mail, No. 13."

This letter came duly to hand on the 20th, on which day the following communication was made to Mr. Martins on the subject of its contents :

No. 2.

"Theatre Royal Drury Lane.

"Aug. 20, 1838.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Previous to the departure of the Chevalier Spontini for Paris, he gave me to understand that the Lord Chamberlain had given him express permission to establish a German opera here for the ensuing season, and that in the event of my concluding any engagement with him, such permission would be transferred to me. I consequently completed one with him, and authorized him to form a company, agreeably to the plans we had laid down.

"My object in seeking an interview with the Lord Chamberlain was to state this to his lordship; but as he did not wish such interview, I apologized to him for making the request.

"I shall therefore be obliged to you to apprise me if his lordship will be pleased to sanction the performance of a German

opera, under the direction of the Chevalier Spontini, during the months of April, May, June, and July next ensuing.

"Yours very truly,

"ALFRED BUNN."

"As I must let the Chevalier know by the 28th instant, enable me to do so."

Which elicited this reply. These are numbered on this occasion, that whoever takes sufficient interest in such matters may mark a rich scene of humbug and duplicity, in all its various bearings:

No. 3.

"Lord Chamberlain's Office.

"August 22, 1838.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Lord Conyngham has read the last letter I received from you, and has only to observe that he has granted no license, nor promised a license, for the establishment of German operas anywhere.

"Very truly yours,

"WILLIAM MARTINS."

"A. Bunn, Esq."

Mr. Martins' reply was followed by an explanatory note, to which the short annexed answer speedily made its appearance:

No. 4.

"Theatre Royal Drury Lane,

"August 22, 1838.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Many thanks for your prompt reply. The Chevalier Spontini, on the evening preceding his departure, when I entered upon the subject of the German opera, gave me expressly to understand that Lord Conyngham had promised him the exclusive license, or its transfer to him he engaged with, and communicated to me the result of interviews he alleged to have had with his lordship, and especially with her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent. On the strength of this, having no previous time to wait on you, I signed a very serious engagement with the Chevalier, and the next day wrote to his lordship, with the view of laying all this before him. In a letter just received from Spontini at Paris, he hesitates to conclude any other engagements until I have the Lord Chamberlain's license.

This letter if his lordship pleases, I will send you. In the mean time, as I cannot address him later than the 28th instant from London, I take leave to refer to the last part of my last letter, and to ask if his lordship will be pleased to grant me the license for German operas, at the period mentioned, under the Chevalier Spontini's direction.

"Very truly yours,  
"A. BUNN."

"W. Martins, Esq."

No. 5.

"Lord Chamberlain's Office,  
Aug. 23, 1838.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"With reference to your letter, dated yesterday, which I have just received, I beg to inform you, that the proper course of application for a license from the lord Chamberlain is to address him in writing, and to explain in full every particular relating to the subject, for his lordship's information.

"Very truly yours,  
"WILLIAM MARTINS."

"A. Bunn, Esq."

Being thus called upon to make a formal application for a license, I did so, but seeing through, or fancying I did, the speciousness of this request, it became me to be extremely cautious. Being in possession of a patent, which gave me, as generally understood, the power to play any thing I pleased, it would not do for me to make any compromise of a property under lease to me; but as I was at the time lessee of the English Opera House, circumstances might arise to render it advisable to have the German operas there instead of at Drury Lane Theatre. A general application was, therefore, made after this fashion:

No. 6.

"Theatre Royal Drury Lane,  
"August 23, 1838.

"MY LORD,

"I beg leave with much respect, to apply for your Lordship's license for the performance of German operas, in the months of April, May, June, and July, ensuing.

"The operas will consist of the choicest works of that school, be supported by the most eminent vocal and instrumental talent, headed by Madame Schroeder Devrient, which Germany

can produce, and under the sole direction of the great composer Spontini, by whom the company of performers will be engaged.

"I have the honour to be, my Lord,  
 "Your obedient humble servant,  
 "A. BUNN."

"To the Lord Chamberlain."

From the date of this application until the 10th of the next month, no notice whatever was taken of it, which induced me to state in a private note to Mr. Martins, the necessity I was under of giving answers to the various parties with whom negotiations were pending, and my reminder led to this piece of official foolery:

No 7.

"Lord Chamberlain's Office,  
 "Sept. 10, 1838.

"Sir,

"I am directed by the Lord Chamberlain to acquaint you, that your application for a license for the performance of German operas, in the months of April, May, June, and July, ensuing, has been taken into consideration, with other earlier applications to the same effect; and his lordship desires me to state to you, that it has been decided not to grant a license for the performance of German operas.

"I am, Sir,  
 "Your obedient servant,  
 "WILLIAM MARTINS."

"A. Bunn, Esq."

Another letter having reached me from the Chevalier Spontini, which laid the ground-work for re-opening the subject with the Lord Chamberlain, it appeared to me important to come at once to a final decision on two points, which were, whether his lordship's determination to grant any license was irrevocable, and whether he intended seriously to suspend the powers of the Drury Lane patent. With that view, the first of the following letters was addressed to the Lord Chamberlain, and the second to his chief officer:

No. 8.

"Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, Sept. 17, 1838.

"MY LORD,

"I have this instant received from the Chevalier Spontini:

the enclosed letter, by which it would seem that his letter to your Lordship of the 7th of last month has been so far misconstrued, that it abandoned all idea of a lengthened license, and only sought one, in conjunction with me, for the next year. I have the honour, through the medium (in your lordship's absence) of the Vice-Chamberlain, to forward that letter, respectfully trusting it may lead to a favourable reconsideration of the subject. I venture to assure your lordship, that no entertainment is at present in such demand by the public—that it is proposed to produce it on the same scale of grandeur as the Italian operas, and yet, by being played on the intervening nights, it cannot possibly interfere with the interests of that or any other theatre. In the hope of your lordship's protection,

"I have the honour to be, my Lord,

"Your obedient humble servant,

"A. BUNN."

"To the Lord Chamberlain, &c. &c."

No. 9.

"Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, Sept. 17, 1838.

"SIR,

"On my return to town, I have been favoured with your letter of the 10th instant, apprizing me of the Lord Chamberlain's decision not to grant a license for the performance of German operas. As no species of entertainment is at present in more demand by the public, and as it is one that does not at all interfere with the privileges or advantages of any other theatre, I shall be obliged to you to inform me if the supposed powers of the Drury Lane patent, by virtue of which German operas were given at this theatre, under the sanction of her Majesty, in the year 1833, will be questioned, and whether such performances under the said patent will be prohibited?

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"A. BUNN.

"To William Martins, Esq."

—and with the annexed reply the business of the German operas terminated:

No. 10.

"Lord Chamberlain's Office, Sept. 21, 1838.

"The Lord Chamberlain has received your letter of the 17th instant, enclosing one from the Chevalier Spontini; and I am

directed by his lordship to acquaint you, with reference to the Chevalier's letter of the 7th instant, that he was informed by a communication the next day, that only English entertainments of the stage were sanctioned at the Theatres Royal, Drury Lane, and Covent Garden. The other part of the letter of the 7th, to which you allude, was clearly understood and considered; and the Lord Chamberlain can only repeat what was stated on the 10th instant to all the applicants, that it is not intended to grant a license for the performance of German operas.

"I am, Sir,  
"Your obedient servant,  
"WILLIAM MARTINS."

"To A. Bunn, Esq."

What do you think of a PATENT THEATRE now, good master reader? In the year 1833 we had a German company, of the highest order of talent, performing at Drury Lane Theatre, not merely unopposed by the Lord Chamberlain of that day, but countenanced by the consort of our gracious monarch, the exemplary QUEEN ADELAIDE, the promoter of every useful institution, the patroness of all art and science, the protectress of every wish, every want, every necessity—who extended her support so far as to allow her sanction to be publicly announced at the head of the play-bills. In 1838 a license was refused for such performances, and the authority under which they *had* been given was disputed. Our benign sovereign is too full of gentleness and consideration, too anxious for the welfare of all places of public amusement, too fond of the art and too fine a judge of it, to have been, in my firm opinion, at all cognizant of this transaction, which bore the impress of malice and tortuosity on the very face of it. The loss of the £100 annuity, and the sudden and unexpected appearance of Killigrew's patent, having rendered the prospect of any farther emolument being derived from Drury Lane Theatre somewhat apocryphal, all desire to serve it had died away, and every inclination to oppress it became manifest. The powers of the Lord Chamberlain were given for the correction, and not for the institution, of abuses, to purify all matters submitted to the public taste, and not to prevent any matter so purified from being submitted to that taste; and the present prohibition was a profligate stretch of authority. Had parliament been sitting, we could have found friends enough in either house to have brought the matter under legislative consideration; but that not being the case, we were compelled to submit. "There'll be a time"

when all that's "rotten in the state of Denmark" will be cleansed and purged away! O that I could at this moment have said, as I felt,

"When vice prevails, and impious men bear sway,  
The post of honour is a private station:"

but I had to move onwards, and did so. It will naturally be asked, as it often has been, why any notice was taken of such prohibition, and why the whole matter was not left to the public decision? The first step taken in such cases by the officers of the Lord Chamberlain is to intimidate the foreigners proposed to be brought over; and however riotous they are in their own country, they are to a man remarkably nervous in entering into difficulties with the authorities of this. Madame Pasta would not cross the stage while the Chamberlain's *veto* was hanging over her head; and the Chevalier Spontini would not move an inch until the Chamberlain's sanction was obtained. Therefore, as long as any such officer enjoys the excellence of a giant's strength, and the tyranny of using it, so long will the patents (pretty little delusions!) be worth about a penny a piece, and be then rather dear at the price!

An eminent divine, whose name, if mentioned, would be a high authority on all matters connected with literature, dramatic or otherwise, favoured me, some time after the commencement of the season, with these valuable observations, so peculiarly applicable to the general disposition of the Lord Chamberlain, that it is important to give his note a place in furtherance of my own views. The principle exemplified in it furnishes a lesson which I very much doubt if the successors of Lord Halifax will like to study—certainly but few of them will be found to put in force:

"November 27, 1838.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I have too long delayed thanking you for the admission to your theatre, for which I am much obliged. I am glad to see you make so vigorous a head against the common difficulties of management in our very dull time. I wish the great people would get over their propensities for the tinsel and trifling of the Italian theatre. Something I should think, might be done by a direct application to the Queen—a formal petition requesting her to patronize the English school of either (and both) tragedy and comedy. These high personages often require to have their attention turned on the things which they ought to see.

"Lord Halifax, when Lord Chamberlain, offered £500 for the best comedy. If the present Lord Chamberlain would do the same, I am quite sure he would restore at least the dawn of a dramatic ray.

"Believe me truly

"Yours,

"&c. &c. &c."

"To A. Bunn, Esq."

An attempt was made at this time on the English Opera House stage to palm off a young man, of the name, I think, of Walton, as an actual descendant of the bard of Avon. His countenance naturally bore some resemblance to the best authenticated portraits of the poet, and it was proposed to render his identity still less doubtful by introducing him in the character of Shakspeare himself, in a piece concocted for the occasion. From having witnessed his performance, I thought the young man had too much talent to have resorted to any such quackery for the mere purpose of making that talent known. It required very little biographical information to believe that the youth's lineal recommendations rested on a very slight foundation, and his laying claim to them was therefore only likely to impede rather than advance his histrionic pretensions. What I felt, I put in practice; for had I witnessed Mr. Walton's performance, where it had not been ushered in with such delusive proclamation, I should not have felt justified in refusing him an engagement; as it was, the assumption of so sacred a name might have rendered all his exertions, as I fear they have done, abortive. This was his application:

"I am induced to address you, from information that you are a gentleman not to be prejudiced by others, but always judging for yourself.

"I saw you at the Lyceum, when I lately made my *début* as the representative of my namesake of immortal memory, in a dramatic trifle which I had sketched merely for the purpose of my introduction to the London public. It may perhaps be called a bold, if not impudent attempt from a tyro; but as the audience expressed their approbation, (and Mr. Sheridan Knowles and yourself were amongst the number who did me that honour,\*) I

\* People should be very cautious how they give an opinion. I was talking in the box-office of Drury Lane Theatre some years ago with Charles Wright, when he had charge of it; and happening in the course of conversation to point out a passage in *Don Juan*, and to express a doubt that any champagne in his store could come up to this description, he sent me a dozen of superb wine in the course of the day' begging me



thought I had gained the point proposed, for I then knew nothing about newspaper reports. But the pot-house critics of the Sunday press (the gin-and-water co-mates of the actors, who felt indignant at having to perform indifferent parts to one whom they kindly termed an ill-clad, strolling vagabond) thought otherwise, and I have been abused by them with a rancour that has thrown me upon a sick-bed.

"You witnessed my performance—you have experienced judgment, unwarped by prejudice—will you allow me an opportunity in the young Shaksperian characters? *Romeo, Orlando, Benedict*, or in others more melo-dramatic and operatic—*Gambia* in the *Slave*, *Daran* in the *Exile*, at the re-opening of Drury Lane?

"I am, with respect,

"Sir, your humble servant,

"W. WALTON SHAKSPEARE."

"34, Bedford Street, Strand.

"To A. Bunn, Esq."

Madame Albertazzi having, during the recess, made her *début* on the English stage by taking a benefit on the 20th of August at Drury Lane Theatre, was considered, as she proved, a valuable acquisition to it; and accordingly an engagement of a month, previous to her return to the Italian Opera at Paris, was proposed to and accepted by her; and she opened the theatre for the last season of my management. An adaptation of Rossini's *Gazza Ladra* was prepared with the taste and judgment which distinguish Mr. Bishop, and experienced a reception surpassing most outbursts of enthusiasm that I remember. Indeed it was beautifully executed—the principal responsibility resting with Mr. H. Phillips, then Mr. Balfe, Mr. Allen, Mr. Giubilei, Mr. Stretton, Miss Poole, and Madame Albertazzi; in whose hands any thing short of complete success was not to be anticipated. Here was a chance for the worthy people of seeing an opera in English, introduced in a manner I doubt me if it will be soon produced in again. The *MAID OF PALAISSEAU*, thus represented, was performed ten nights, the last time being supported

to give a candid opinion of its quality, and thanking me for such a puff; and to my amazement, I read in all the next morning's papers—

"LORD, BYRON'S OPINION OF CHARLES WRIGHT'S CHAMPAGNE!!

"And the small ripple spilt upon the beach  
Scarcely o'erpassed the CREAM of your CHAMPAGNE,  
When o'er the brim the sparkling bumpers reach,  
That spring-dew of the spirit! the heart's-rain!"

by a spectacle entitled *Charlemagne*, in which my friend Ducrow again exercised all his wonted ingenuity, and displayed all the attractions of his establishment, and in which likewise appeared "the very head and front of my offending," *Mr. Van Amburgh and his lions!* The yell from the beauties, calling themselves Shaksperians, was as tremendous as it was ridiculous, and every shilling attracted to this medley was gall an wormwood to their conceit. In the blindness of their excitement they forgot that we had no Shakspearian actors alive, and that an attempt at the representation of any of the bard's immortalities would disgrace the theatre far more than any other performance. They forgot that *The Tempest*, performing at the other house with the announced quotation of "the text of Shakspeare," owed all the attraction it possessed to the novelty of Miss P. Horton, "My gentle Ariel," singing while suspended in the air; because it had been infinitely better acted, and infinitely better prepared in that very theatre, "many a time and oft." They forgot all that they ought to have remembered; and contrasting the unconcealed character of the *mélange* at Drury Lane with that of the latent mummery at Covent Garden Theatre, they decried the one lessee, and hurraed the other, with all the frenzy which distinguishes fools and fanatics. If the spectacle in question had been introduced as the staple commodity of the evening's entertainments, to the exclusion of more intellectual or refined performances, it might have given reason for just reproach; but recollecting that the representation of Shakspeare's noblest plays by Mr. Kemble, Mr. Charles Kemble, and Mrs. Siddons, had been supported by *Blue Beard* and *Timour the Tartar*, with Astley's whole stud of horses at Covent Garden Theatre, and that owing to the want of attraction of some of our finest dramas in the hands of some of our ablest performers at Drury Lane Theatre, the fortunes of that establishment had, in the *classic days* of Mr. SHERIDAN, been completely retrieved by a dog, (which though a Newfoundland one, would certainly, under such circumstances, be called by sportsmen, and with some justice, a *retriever*,) I could not see that I was so very much to blame.

If it was found necessary by my predecessors, in both theatres, to have horses clamber up the smoking ruins of a castle, and a dog to jump into a tank of water, at the time that their respective establishments possessed the most celebrated performers our stage has ever known, whose exertions in the best pieces that were ever written proved abortive, how much more necessary must it have been with me to introduce a pageant\*

\* Have these croakers forgotten that Garrick made more money by a Shaksperian pageant than by all his Shaksperian acting? Murphy says,

with these astonishing animals, who had few other pieces and few other performers. But this species of blockhead, who was now assailing us, invariably exercises prejudice at the expense of reason; and, in the absence of every kind of information, let us only look at a slight result on the present occasion. Rossini's enchanting opera of *La Gazza Ladra*, charmingly represented, was played the first five nights to a net receipt of £530, making a nightly average of £106, by which the theatre incurred a nightly loss of nearly £100! It was played the *next* five nights, backed by *Charlemagne*, to a net receipt of £1371, being a nightly average of £274, by which the theatre was a gainer of some £20 a night! What would your growlers do in such a case as this? Why, they would advise you to persevere in a course of legitimacy—but what they would *not* do, is easily disposed of—they would neither pay you your losses, nor pity you for incurring them.

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## CHAPTER IX.

"War, war, no peace"—More "last works"—Difference between the salaries of horses and actors—*Tria juncta in uno*—Master Betty—Lord Mayor's day—Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*—Murphy alarmed at his own weather—A bad marksman—London Lions—Mr. Hill's prophetic "Pooh, pooh!"—Another reader of plays—More means—C. Kean and Macready—Braham and Phillips—Mr. Durrant and the lion's mane—Her Majesty's patronage—Royal visit to the stage—A royal feed—State command, and its results—Farinelli—Bon mot of the Duke—Lenten entertainments again—Mr. Ducombe's humorous speech—Larks of the laity, and cautions of the clergy—The King's cock-crower—How the Lord Chamberlain passes Lent, and how the divines observe it—Lord John Russell's assertion, and Mr. Bunn's contradiction—Pleasant prospects for the British empire.

THE commencement of hostilities began this season, at the opposite house, after the usual fashion, both as respects the promises held out to the public, and the spirit entertained towards the lessee of Drury Lane Theatre, as this interesting *morceau* will bear witness:

### "THEATRE ROYAL COVENT GARDEN.

"Mr. Macready begs most respectfully to announce, that this

"Mr. Garrick, who always joined the strictest economy to the most liberal expenditure, brought Shakspeare's Jubilee from Stratford to Drury Lane. The public was so charmed with this uncommon pageant, which was ingeniously contrived and judiciously managed, that the representation of it was repeated near one hundred times."

theatre will be reopened on Monday, September 24th, 1838. In entering upon this second and to him most serious experiment he will only say, the same views with which he undertook the conduct of this establishment last season will be followed up, and his more specific pledges will continue to be strictly fulfilled.

"No exertion will be spared in presenting the national drama, whether as *a branch of literature*, or as a department of art, WITH EVERY ADVANTAGE!!

"The revival of the standard plays of Shakspeare, *in the genuine text of the poet*, will be persevered in with increased activity, and without regard to expense in attaining the utmost fidelity of historic illustration.

"New pieces will be brought out in quick succession with the same attention to decoration, especially pieces of such a character as to depend mainly upon extrinsic attractions; and the system of abstaining from *all exaggerated and delusive announcements in the play-bills will be rigidly adhered to!!!*

We will dismiss these precious effusions with one parting exemplification. The reader has already had under his observation the pledge which was given, that "all exaggeration and delusive announcements in the play-bills would be abstained from;" he has also seen how the pledge was redeemed in the announcement of Mr. Stanfield's *LAST WORK*, last Christmas. He shall now see how the said pledge was again redeemed in the subsequent instance of *another!* of Mr. Stanfield's "last works."

# "KING HENRY THE FIFTH,

"FROM THE TEXT OF SHAKSPEARE!

"IN ANNOUNCING THIS

"LAST SHAKSPERIAN REVIVAL,

it may be advisable, if not necessary, to depart so far from the usual practice of this management, as to offer a few words in explanation, or apology, for what may seem an innovation!!

"The play of *King Henry the Fifth* is a *dramatic history*, and the poet to preserve the continuity of the action, and connect what would otherwise be detached scenes, has adopted, from the *Greek Drama*, the expedient of a Chorus to narrate and describe the intervening incidents and events.

"To impress more strongly on the auditor, and render more palpable these portions of the story, which have not the advantage of action, and still are requisite to the drama's completeness, the narrative and descriptive poetry spoken by the Chorus is accompanied with

"PICTORIAL ILLUSTRATIONS,

"FROM THE PENCIL OF

"MR. STANFIELD !!!!"

(Extract from the Covent Garden play-bill, June 10, 1839.)

In that very charming poem of *The House of Mourning* is a couplet, if I remember rightly, that must always be present to the mind of a metropolitan manager—it always has been to mine—and was so more particularly at the present moment. His season is just such a picture :

"The foreground stormy, and the distance dark—  
A covering deluge, but without an ark!"

as a recurrence to my memorandum will fully testify.

*October 23.*—Produced the spectacle of *Charlemagne*, in which are displayed the genius of Ducrow, and the wondrous power of Van Amburgh over the beasts of the forest—it was quite successful. Now look ye at all these animals—horses, lions, tigers, leopards, &c. &c. Observe *their* docility, and *their* ability, and then look for those qualifications in the actors—the comparison nauseates one. There is more intellect and pliability in these extraordinary creatures, than in the present combined companies of Drury Lane and Covent Garden theatres. Yet I suppose "the great tragedian" gives himself at least what I used to give him, £30 a week—Phillips has £35; others have £25., £20., £15., £10., and so on: whereas a few pounds of meat, a few bushels of corn, and a few pails of water, and your horse and your lion will lick the dust before ye—"Quot homines, tot sententiæ;" I only give *mine*.

*October 24.*—I have seen myself lustily abused to-day for wishing and trying to introduce the *Bayadères* at Drury Lane Theatre, and laughed at for being out-jockeyed by Yates. It does not follow that because, in one of his tomfoolery speeches, Yates chooses to say the patent theatres competed with him for the possession of these niggers, it is true. No one will suspect Macready of having made them an offer; and even the thought of doing so never once entered my head: That any one should credit Fred's jokes is odd enough, but that a varlet should discuss them as truths, to another man's prejudice is unwarrantable.

*October 27.*—*Herminie Elssler*, by virtue of a pair of stout legs, and throwing them about in all directions, will please those who reside estward of Temple Bar, though she disgusted the *habitués* of the Opera House. What a troublesome set of devils these foreigners are !

*November 1.*—I prevailed on Reynolds the dramatist to visit Drury Lane. His first appearance in a theatre for sixteen years—his age, seventy-four, this is his birth-day, he being born the 1st of November, 1764,) does not hold out much hope of his making as many more as I could wish. I asked our ancient friend, Mr. Const, to meet him, and they sat it out, till within five minutes of "the chimes at midnight." Mr. Capel, the stock-broker, joined the party, and the ages of the three, if put together, would amount to at least 230 !!!

"The psalmist numbered out the days of man—  
They are enough ——"

But these old boys don't seem to think so. It was pleasant to see them; and to feel one was the cause of their evening's amusement was still pleasanter.

*November 8.*—Made an offer to the Master Betty's "Master Betty," who is now provincializing after the fashion his worthy father began upon: they tell me he has *materiel* in him—his name justifies my giving him an appearance, and the cockneys will soon find out what that *materiel* is made of—but he won't come yet—read his letter:—

"November 7, 1838,  
"Sun Hotel, Southampton.

"SIR,

"I am commissioned by my father to acknowledge your favour of the 5th inst.; and he desires me to say that he is of opinion, as I am going on so prosperously in the provinces, and have so many engagements in the country to fulfil this winter, that it would not be advisable for me to accept any London engagement, however tempting, at the present moment. He takes leave to return you his best thanks for your very polite and handsome reference to his judgment; and

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"With my father's most respectful

"Remembrances,

"Your obliged and very humble servant,

"HENRY J. BETTY.

"A. Bunn, Esq."

*November 9.*—Invited to the Annual Mansion House celebration by my hospitable friend the Lord Mayor (Wilson) har-binger of our worthy corps: an excellent man in all respects; but I have too great a horror of these public festivities to enjoy even *his* excellencies on such an occasion. I do remember

what was written, some many years rolled by, on the man who stood at my lord's back, in the armour worn by our fifth Harry at the battle of *Agincourt*:

" Our modern hero, clad in steel,  
With Henry's arms and martial port,\*  
Proved at Guildhall, by many a reel,  
That he had been at *A-Gin-Court* !"

*November 17.*—The new ballet of "*The Spirit of Air*" came forth with great success. Wieland's *North Wind* "unique"—one great point to arrive at.

*November 21.*—Had a pleasant note from Thomas Moore, of poetical celebrity, expressive of a great anxiety to see "*The Lions*." All the world, especially the most intelligent part of it, wants to see them, yet a few in that world are abusing me like a pickpocket for engaging them. Had a still pleasanter treat, that of sitting in a box with the poet, nearly all the evening.

*November 22.*—A severe accident happened to Messrs. Gilbert and Wieland, in the new ballet, by the snapping in two of the swivel by which they were suspended, ten feet high in air,—more managerial pleasure—a successful ballet stopped in its career, and the two principal performers in it half killed, by the machination, perhaps, or, at all events, by the shameful neglect of some scoundrel of a carpenter.

*November 22.*—Issued the following manifesto for the edification of the cockneys:—

" ROSSINI'S CELEBRATED OPERA,  
" GUILLAUME TELL.

" The lessee of Drury Lane Theatre begs leave to announce to the patrons and professors of the musical art his intention of producing, for the first time in this country, Rossini's acknowledged *chef-d'œuvre*, *Guillaume Tell*, on Monday, December 3rd, 1838.

" The obstacles which have hitherto prevented the performance of the opera in England, viz., the want of a sufficient number of principal singers, and of choral strength—obstacles (which it might have been reasonably expected would have been overcome long since at the Italian Opera House, a theatre supposed to be devoted to the cultivation of the higher class of

\* The printer's devil says this must mean the City Marshal-port.

music) the lessee of Drury Lane has made every effort to surmount.

"*Guillaume Tell* has been produced in almost every country of Europe, England excepted. It has consequently been the aim of the lessee of Drury Lane to endeavour to efface an obloquy that has attached to the musical character of the British nation, which may be said to be nearly unacquainted with the most perfect work of Rossini.

"The libretto will merely be a faithful translation of the lyrical drama of Messrs. Jouy and Hypolite Bis, to which Rossini composed his opera, in order that the character of the music may not, in any one instance, be departed from.

"It is therefore confidently hoped that the production of this distinguished work will meet with that liberal encouragement from the amateurs and professors of musical science in England, which will at once offer a deserved homage to the genius of Rossini, and redound to the honour of the country."

*November 30.*—Between last Tuesday and this day (only three days in all) we have had severe frost, and ice two inches thick; complete thaw; heavy rains; a gale of wind; thunder as loud and lightning as bright as you please; clattering hail, and brilliant sunshine. Such a variety in so short a space of time, too, that

"My young remembrance cannot parallel  
A fellow to it."

Murphy is completely beaten; the elements are too much for him, and yet, odd enough, this very day I have received this very letter from him, accompanying his prophecies for 1839—I can't help inclining to him after all:

"No. 14, Trinity Terrace, Trinity Square, Borough.  
"November 30, 1838.

"DEAR SIR,

"As a slight return for your politeness at the commencement of the year, may I beg your acceptance of the enclosed copy of my *Weather Almanack for 1839*? by which you will perceive that, notwithstanding the clamour raised against the work by certain parties, from the number of editions to which in the course of a few days it has reached, the public appear to take a different view of its merits—so that should the facts at the commencement of the year be in my favour, there is



little reason to fear that the sale will fall short of that of the last.

"I cannot conclude without expressing my thanks for your letters of introduction when going to Paris, but more particularly for that to Mr. Goldsmith, whose attentions to me while there I shall not readily forget.

"With best wishes for your health and happiness,

"I have the honour to be,

"Dear Sir, your obliged and very

"Obedient humble servant,

"P. MURPHEY."

"A. Bunn, Esq., &c. &c. &c."

*December 3.*—Never had a greater fag than the adaptation of *Guillaume Tell*; but out it came this evening, and, as far as applause went, was most successful. But four hours and a half, even of Rossini, are too much for your cockney, who pretends to a great deal more than he either understands, or in reality likes. He and all that belong unto him are essentially undramatic.

The production of this noble opera was attempted to be forestalled and injured by another of those disgraceful efforts which had been made the preceding season at Covent Garden Theatre, in the instance of *Joan of Arc*. It is nonsense to call a proceeding of this kind, RIVALRY; it is quackery, and nothing else. In order to divert public attention from the elaborate attention paid at Drury Lane Theatre to ensure a perfect representation of this opera, Mr. Macready announced for performance Knowles's melo drama of *William Tell*, WITH ADDITIONAL SCENES BY THE AUTHOR, aided by the introduction of chorusses. There could be but one motive in all this—for the gentleman was known to hate the performance of the principal character, and it has ever been proverbial that his affection for music is about tantamount to his knowledge of it. To unworthy attempts like this, is to be ascribed much of the mischief that has been done in those theatres, and much of the ruin hanging over the heads of the professors. Had the performance of each establishment been classified, this could not have happened; and with a dramatic public this would not have been tolerated. I can fearlessly assert, for hundreds upon hundreds will be found to back the assertion, that no piece was ever put upon the English stage in a more correct manner than this opera was on the occasion in question;\* but some maintained (in "nameless print" to be

\* A humorous circumstance, connected with its *mise en scène*, was somewhat calculated to nullify this eulogium. Mr. Braham proved so in-

sure) that a few daubs and a few voices at Covent Garden were more effective than some of the most characteristic scenery ever designed by the Messrs. Grieve, and the exertions of upwards of one hundred picked chorus singers introduced at Drury Lane. But this was called the "voice of the public press." It made me savage at the time, as confirming the unfortunate conviction that a real theatrical feeling did not exist with the community at large; but I laugh at it now, though of the same conviction still. The position of these two theatres will be defined sooner than is expected by the rude hand of necessity; they will either both be shut for want of a tenant, as they have been while in possession of one; and the attention of government be called to their condition; or the ploughshare passing over the ruins of both, his grace the Duke of Bedford will turn one into a brewery, and extend Covent Garden market into the body of the other. This latter case is the one to back, for all the attention that government will ever pay to the subject, will be to regret the loss, and its inability to make it up.

The outcry of the Shaksperian clique, by which are meant Mr. Macready and his toadies, was renewed with increased violence at this time, by its becoming known that the highest personage in the realm, who was about to return from the dull routine of the Pavilion enjoyments to the more animated ones of Buckingham Palace, had expressed a strong desire to witness the wonders enacted by Mr. Van Amburgh; a tolerably strong proof that the humbug preached up about the legitimate drama was exposed, in the most refined circles, to the ridicule conveyed by that cutting truism, "*Maintenant rien n'est plus légitime que tout ce qui ne l'est pas du tout.*" There is no demand now-a-days for tragedy, for one very good reason, that there are no actors to act it; and for another, that people have plenty of it at home!! It is to be hoped that a time will come when the little gang (the pressgang if you will) who have fooled their idol into a belief that he is a fine performer, will leave off their luminous larkings. They may assert, and vow; and fume, and fret, and entertain whatever notions they please; but the people, almost to a man, will at last adopt a favour-

different a toxophilite in the celebrated trial to which *Tell* was subject, during the rehearsals, that the arrow was discharged by a skilful hand behind the scenes, Braham covering the party, and receiving the approbation due to another. On one occasion the arrow accidentally missed the apple, and Braham finding the audience disposed to a titter, threw them in a loud roar by advancing to the footlights and saying, "*Ladies and gentlemen, it wasn't I who shot at the apple!*"

its and comprehensive saying of mine excellent and kind-hearted friend Thomas Hill, and exclaim, "Pooh, pooh, I happen to know to the contrary."

The introduction of the last Christmas novelty placed by me before the London public, and the last I hope that ever ~~will~~ be placed by me, (that is to say—if I have to pay for the pleasure of so doing,) terminated the labours of the year 1838, consisting of the usual harlequinade of the season. The Lord Chamberlain's license for this pantomime was sent to Drury Lane Theatre enclosed in the blank cover of a letter that had already done duty, by having been the envelope of a letter from Mr. Martins, of the Lord Chamberlain's office, to Mr. Lowndes of Lincoln's Inn; and conceiving it to be as extraordinary a mode of sending an official document as could well be adopted, I enclosed it to Mr. Martins with these few words:—

"MY DEAR SIR,

"The license of the pantomime has been sent to this theatre in the enclosed uncereemonious manner, the said license being countersigned '*Wm. Loftus Lowndes*.' Will you allow me to inquire of you, before I make any other application, what alteration has taken place in the readership of plays?

"I am, my dear Sir,

"Yours truly,

"A. BUNN."

"W. Martins, Esq.,

"Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,

"Dec. 27, 1838."

I have already discussed the peculiar and singular circumstance of the novelties of Drury Lane being submitted to the perusal of a performer at Covent Garden Theatre. That was a droll affair undoubtedly; but the fact of their being submitted to the examination of a lawyer, as ignorant of *my* trade as I am of *his*, merely because he happened to be the legal adviser of the examiner himself, out-heroded Herod. That such, however, was the case, the subjoined reply to my letter will testify:

"St. James's Palace,  
"Saturday.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Mr. Lowndes officiates for Mr. Kemble, who is absent on leave.

"I have asked for an explanation as to the circumstance of

the license coming to you in the manner it did; but I am quite sure that no disrespect could have been intended.

"Very truly yours,

"WILLIAM MARTINS."

But the province of the manager of a theatre is a curious one indeed: for inasmuch as his situation must provide him with a sufficient number of enemies, so must he either submit to unheard-of discourtesies, informalities, injustice, and oppression, if he wishes to preserve a comparative degree of peace; or if he does, what every other man would, resent such indignities, he at once increases to a frightful extent the number of his antagonists. I find the close of the year—which was a forerunner of a close of the season—thus summed up amongst my memoranda, and it is therefore, respectfully submitted to my readers:

## MEMS.

There's Phillips deeming he'll sing better  
In *Tell* than Braham,—sends a letter  
Vowing, enough to rouse one's laughter,  
He'll rather go than sing it *after*.

*Mem.*—As we starve, and may be closed too,  
To let him go, if he's disposed to.  
Then Charley Kean, engaged to come up,  
The *pros* and *cons* contrives to sum up,  
Thinking his fame is getting seedy,  
Or that the "press" is for Macready,  
Or the receipts will never pay him  
The usual figure, when we play him.  
Or that some accident will mar gain,  
Has written to be off his bargain!

*Mem.*—He forgets they may forget him—  
And other things—however, let him!  
My famed St. Alban's correspondence  
Might put the Duke in deep despondence,  
And, as the lot before of Zany,  
Might prove that "*one* fool maketh *MANY*."

*Mem.*—In whatever light I view it,  
'Tis wiser therefore not to do it.  
Were one sharp weapons prone to handle,  
I might just now indulge in scandal;  
But wish her well, and won't believe it—

*Mem.*—So it's best alone to leave it.  
A joke, by Hook, is very current,  
"The lion turned his *mane* on Durrant."

*Mem.*—As he made a very wry face,  
I'm rather glad 'twas not in *my* face.  
So as with managerial bother,  
With one disaster and another,  
The year to no one good has tended,

*Mem.*—I'm d——d glad the year is ended!

It is impossible to conceive a greater degree of excitement and interest than that which had attended Mr. Van Amburgh's exhibition up to the close of the year 1838, unless it be that which followed it through the earlier part of 1839, while he remained with me. A natural curiosity to witness *such* a natural curiosity pervaded all ranks of society; and it is an indisputable fact, that while a few discontented and conceited scribblers were arraying themselves against this performance, with the latent view of upholding, by contrast, "Shakspeare and Shakspeare's representative," the most illustrious families in the kingdom were nightly and daily to be found in Drury Lane Theatre, to see such an extraordinary representation, and every thing in connexion with it. The deep interest taken by her most gracious Majesty, and all the circumstances thereto relating, having been matter of public notoriety, I may be pardoned for entering upon a subject which otherwise would be delicate ground to touch upon. The high honour conferred by our illustrious sovereign on Drury Lane Theatre, in the first month of the past year, will form a memorable epoch in the annals of that establishment. Having been apprized at Christmas that it was her Majesty's pleasure to witness the extraordinary performance of Mr. Van Amburgh, I did not hesitate one moment in concluding a re-engagement with the proprietors of the animals. Immediately on the Queen's return from Brighton, her Majesty honoured Drury Lane Theatre with her presence—this was on January 10. On the following Thursday, January 17, a similar mark of honour was conferred on this establishment, and on the ensuing Thursday, January 24, the same flattering distinction was shown. On this latter evening, pursuant to arrangements which had been made for the purpose, our gracious Mistress condescended to cross the stage of the theatre for the purpose of seeing the animals, in their more excited and savage state, during the operation of feeding them. It is almost unnecessary to observe, that this gratifying scene took place after the departure of the audience, and that every possible caution was adopted for the comparative comfort and seclusion of the Royal Visiter, which the resources of the theatre permitted, such as enclosing the entrances with crimson draperies, and carpeting the stairs; not merely to shut out the draught of the night air, but to exclude the prying gaze of the many stragglers who remained behind, in hopes of bearing testimony to so unprecedented a compliment paid to the theatre. The animals had been kept purposely without food for six-and-thirty hours, strong symptoms of which had become manifest during Mr. Van Amburgh's performance, by the lion and the panther having simultaneously attacked the lamb on its be-

ing placed in their den; and they would have evidently made but a mouthful apiece of it, had not their almost superhuman master literally lashed them into the most abject and crouching submission. The first portion of food thrown amongst them, seized by the lion as a matter of priority, was enough to convince any sceptick of the fearful savageness of their nature, when out of the control of the one hand whose authority they acknowledged. The rolling of the tiger's eye, while he was devouring the massive lump of meat and bone, clutched between his fore paws, seemed to possess the brilliancy as well as the rapidity of lightning; and was only diverted by a tremendous and sudden spring of the lion, who, having demolished his own portion, seized upon what was left of his ferocious neighbour's fare. The dash against the sides of the den sounded like the felling of huge trees, and was enough by its force and fury to shake the strongest nerves; but it was a positive fact, that while the boldest of the hearts in the royal suit speedily retreated at this unexpected plunge of the forest-monarch, the youthful Queen never moved either face or foot, but with look undiverted, and still more deeply rivited, continued to gaze on the novel and moving spectacle.

Her Majesty's inquiries were not those of a youthful mind, merely intent upon ordinary and unmeaning questions, but bespoke a scrutiny of mind little to be expected in one of such tender years. It was not to be expected that a circumstance, so altogether without precedent, as the ruler of this vast realm condescending to pay a personal visit to the stage itself, could escape the observations of those malicious partisans the sole object of whose life is to carp and cavil at the actions of their equals, and who naturally lie in ambush for an opportunity of attacking their superiors; and the more exalted in rank, the better for the purposes of such people. This visit of their sovereign, this unbending from the cares of state, and indulging in the recreations most suitable to the earlier years of life, when the mind is thirsting for every kind of information, and naturally preferring to mingle the *utile et dulce*, this harmless entertainment was to be questioned, because the Queen was in the case, while every one of her subjects was at full liberty to enjoy it. Pretty sophistry this! because destiny has placed a crown upon your brow, that you are to be debarred from every pursuit of pleasure in which people with not a crown in their pockets are bent upon participating! It is a wonder such logicians admit the propriety of their sovereign even walking or talking, or, except as a mark of especial favour, partaking of any repast beyond "the cameleon's dish;" and, deeming royalty to be a mere state cipher, that they do not require its

members to be kept under glass globes, or wrapped up in silver paper.

To my way of thinking and feeling, a more beautiful or truly interesting sight could not be devised, than to behold this young and lovely creature emerging from the trammels of state which must of necessity confine her so much, and seeking relief in those diversions which instruct and amuse at the same time; and none but a fool will withhold the award of both these qualifications from Mr. Van Amburgh's surpassing exhibition. Her Majesty's patronage of this particular class of entertainment did not end with the bestowal of such a high mark of favour, for on the Tuesday following, January 29, her Majesty honoured the theatre with a **STATE COMMAND**, and Mr. Van Amburgh's exercises were especially included in the entertainments ordered for the occasion, which consisted, in addition, of the *Maid of Artois*, and the ballet of *The Spirit of Air*. Exclusive of this great distinction, Landseer's celebrated picture, exhibited last year in Trafalgar Square, was expressly ordered to be painted, and every facility that could be afforded to this gigantic genius, this prince of painters, this wonder amongst the wonders of art and artists, it is needless to observe, was cheerfully rendered. Her Majesty, moreover, honoured Mr. Van Amburgh with a conversation of some minutes on retiring from the Royal Box; and her inquiries, during their conference, while they bespoke a mind already richly stored with the knowledge of natural history, betrayed the utmost desire for increasing that store.

The malcontents who could discern so crying a sin in these harmless pursuits of their Sovereign, were not backward in circulating all sorts of reports antecedent to this state visit; and foremost amongst them all, was the alleged assurance that, through the decline of the Queen's popularity, the house on this occasion would be nothing to boast of. It would reconcile me to all the horrors of management for the rest of my natural life, if I could boast of a few such receipts throughout a season, as the attraction of her Majesty's visit produced on this occasion; and acting upon the principle I have adopted throughout, of supporting my assertions by documents, I subjoin an abstract of the returns to the treasury; and, by comparing it with that of her Majesty's first visit, the reader will be enabled to judge of the dreadful falling off in his Queen's popularity!!

Amount of the receipts on the occasion of Her Majesty Queen Victoria's second state visit to the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, Tuesday January 29, 1839.

	FIRST PRICE.			SECOND PRICE.		
	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
Box P.S. . . .	35	7	0	8	1	0
O.S. . . .	51	16	0	12	5	0
Pit P.S. . . .	64	19	6	2	12	9
O.P. . . .	78	4	6	1	2	0
Gallery . . .	53	3	0	2	2	0
“ Upper . . .	16	14	0	0	11	0
	<hr/>			<hr/>		
	300	4	0	26	13	0
Box Tickets . . .	243	10	0			
Private Boxes ( <i>exclusive of annual ones</i> )	100	16	0			
Passes . . .	4	0	6	0	9	0
Stalls . . .	36	15	0			
	<hr/>			<hr/>		
Total . . .	685	5	6	27	2	0
				<hr/>		
				£712 7 9		

Twice in the fortnight following this command night was her Majesty pleased again to honour Drury Lane Theatre with her gracious presence; being the sixth visit, in the short space of as many weeks, which she had condescended to pay that establishment.

Nor was the enthusiasm or curiosity felt for Mr. Van Amburgh confined to the illustrious personage whose favours we have been recording, nor to that of the distinguished individuals forming the royal *cortège*. His Grace the Duke of Wellington came twice to see the exhibition, and held a conference of full half an hour each time with our modern *Lysimachus*. The Marquis of Anglesea, Lord Brougham, and a long list of remarkable and fashionable characters, poured into the theatre, day after day, even as early as nine o'clock in the morning, to witness the process of feeding the animals, and to see (more anxiously than any thing else) the extraordinary individual who held such control over them, to the surprise\* as well as admiration of all beholders. It was, in very truth, a wonderful performance, and merited all the eulogy and countenance it received.

\* I have heard a *bon-mot* of his grace the Duke of Wellington, very applicable to his visit on this occasion to Drury Lane, although upon a very different subject; and while I cannot vouch for its authenticity, I may be allowed to believe in it. A nobleman ventured, in a moment of conviviality at his Grace's table, to put this question to him: "Allow me to ask, as we are all here tiled, if you were not *"SURPRISED AT WATER-LOO?"* To which the Duke responded, "No—but I am NOW!"



Barnett's new opera of *Farinelli* was the immediate novelty of any consequence which succeeded the Christmas revels, and was received with the favour that, under any circumstances, must attend the compositions of this gifted master, in the production of whose works I have never felt but one regret, arising out of the unequal libretto with which he has wedded his delightful music. A very interesting circumstance relative to this opera having transpired at the time, is entitled to particular mention; and as it can be best explained by the letter of the party who introduced it to my notice, that letter is subjoined:

"39 Essex-street, Strand, 22d February, 1839.

"SIR,

"You have probably heard of a curious fact connected with the residence of Farinelli at the court of Spain, and with the subject of Mr. Barnett's new opera, (a fact recorded in the life of Farinelli,) namely, that during ten years of his residence at Madrid, he sang the same song every evening to King Philip the Fifth.

"This identical song is now in the possession of a lady, at whose request I take the liberty of addressing you. It is preserved in a manuscript of the late Mr. William Walker, of Hayes, the astronomer, who was personally acquainted with Farinelli. Mr. Walker possessed refined curiosity in matters of musical taste. He attached great value to this composition, which, he often said, no other person in England possessed. It is a song of acknowledged beauty and power, as indeed may be inferred from its almost magic influence on the Spanish monarch; and these recommendations to public favour are obviously enhanced by the association with the two leading characters and the subject of the new opera.

"It therefore seems evident, that the song (which is called 'Pallido il sole,') is an essential feature of the opera of '*Farinelli*;' and I may submit to your experienced judgment, whether the restoration of this song would not at the present moment be peculiarly attractive and interesting, and whether the public would not listen with curiosity to the identical melody which had such touching influence on the Spanish monarch.

"No copy of the MS. has ever been given, and but for these considerations its possessor would not agree to make it public now.

"I have corresponded with Mr. Barnett on the subject, who states that he should have been glad to avail himself of the opportunity, had not his opera already appeared; and he suggests that Messrs. Cramer and Co. would like to publish the song in question.

"The lady at whose desire I address you, thinks, however, that it should first be submitted to yourself; and I therefore hasten to address you on the subject, and to request the favour of an answer at your earliest convenience.

"I have the honour to be, Sir, respectfully,

"Your very obedient humble servant,

"WM. SIDNEY GIBSON.

"To A. Bunn, Esq."

If this communication had made its appearance previous to the first performance of *Farinelli*, the introduction of the song in question would have been quite a feature; but the opera having been before the town nearly three weeks when the first intimation was made to us upon the subject, its subsequent production could have answered no earthly purpose, nor could it possibly have repaid the sum which would naturally have been demanded for it. The document, however, contains a valuable theatrical anecdote, and as such it is gratifying to me to be enabled to give it place amongst the many others herein introduced.

The success which had attended the performance of Mr. Van Amburgh, and the peculiar patronage extended to it by the court, induced me to speak to the Marquis Conyngham, (my darling friend, who still stuck to me like a leech,) and to solicit his lordship's permission to introduce it on the nights in Lent, when dramatic performances were prohibited; and I was the more induced to make this request, and to believe it would be granted, from my knowledge of the miserable mélange of absolute trash hitherto sanctioned on those nights at the Adelphi and other theatres in his lordship's jurisdiction. The Marquis appeared to admit the reason of my argument, and begged me to commit it to paper. I did so, after this fashion :

"MY LORD,

"I take the liberty very respectfully of inquiring if there will be any objection to the exhibition of the lions on those ensuing evenings, when ordinary theatrical performances are prohibited?

"The case is one of such peculiar circumstance, and so different from any other of parties who may seek a similar indulgence, that I venture to submit it to your lordship's consideration. If I am unable to exhibit them on the nights in question, the proprietor of them will thus lose one-third of the income he can receive at unrestricted theatres; and I shall consequently be obliged to relinquish the future engagement of them altogether, from my inability to use and pay them more than four nights a week.

"I therefore respectfully ask if there will be any objection to an evening exhibition on those days, introduced either in a promenade, or with a miscellaneous concert?

"I have the honour to be

"Your lordship's obedient humble servant,

"A. BURN."

"The Most Noble the Marquis Conyngham."

Those who know Lord Conyngham's manner, and have watched the progress of his lordship's persecution of this theatre, will not be surprised to learn that he refused my petition. The disgusting scene of humbug that had been so long practised, and which I had so long combated, respecting the lenten performances, was therefore again called in question by his lordship's refusal, and was made matter of more serious discussion than it had hitherto experienced, or than was anticipated by his lordship's allies and subalterns. Mr. Duncombe, who had distinguished himself in a previous session of Parliament by his able exposure of this heterogeneous scene of folly and misrule, notwithstanding the rejection of his bill by the House of Lords, again undertook the advocacy of the business; and not obtaining from Lord John Russell any satisfactory information on his first mention of the subject, he made a direct motion on the 28th of February, in a speech of so much genuine humour, containing so much excellent argument, and so irresistible in all its conclusions, that I should consider the case but very partially placed before the reader if it did not, as it deserves, cut a very prominent figure amongst other documents:

Mr. T. Duncombe said. "As the noble lord opposite had stated that it was not expedient to bring on, at that late hour of the night, his motion of the blockade of Mexico, perhaps it might be thought that he (Mr. Duncombe) was not justified in bringing forward the motion, of which he had given notice, as to the blockade of the city of Westminster by her Majesty's Lord Chamberlain. (*A laugh.*) But he hardly thought it necessary to apologize for a motion which was founded in common justice and common sense. If there was any fault in bringing it on, it rested with the noble lord, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, who, when he brought the matter forward the other night, would not give the house the slightest information about it; if, therefore, any apology was necessary, he left the noble lord to make it. He was aware that the noble lord had a very large majority who supported him on that occasion, because they thought that he (Mr. Duncombe) was irregular both in point of time and in point of form; because he wished to make a motion on a petition without notice; and in point of form, be-

cause, as the Lord Chamberlain must have acted under the advice of her Majesty's ministers, it seemed ungracious to make her Majesty a party in the dispute. But he (Mr. Duncombe) had been told by many of these members, that if he brought forward the matter as a substantive motion, he should have their support; and if the noble lord laid the city of Westminster under a proscription, merely because he said 'it shall be so,' the house, he hoped, would require a reason from him, be the religious or political opinions of members what they may. The grievance which was inflicted on the city of Westminster was, the being restricted from theatrical entertainments on Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent, when, on the other side of Oxford-street, and on the other side of the river, there were no such restrictions: and when parties, and balls, and levées (*Hear, hear!*) were going on, why should the inhabitants of the city of Westminster alone be precluded from rational amusements? And the evil not only fell on the inhabitants of Westminster, but on those unfortunate persons, the players and operatives (*A laugh*) of that city, (*Hear!*) one-third of whose pay was stopped every week. An hon. member had said that these individuals had entered into engagements with a full knowledge of what was to be expected; but they had no engagements; they were paid by the night, and by this unjust prohibition one-third of their income was stopped. He should like to ask her Majesty's ministers, the chief actors in the great political drama, how they would like to have one-third of their salaries stopped, (*Laughter,*) merely because there happened to be no house? (*Laughter.*) He did not think that his friend Mr. Rice, of Downing Street, would like it any more than Mr. Rice of the Adelphi. (*Hear, hear, and laughter.*) On looking into the *Morning Post*, he found that yesterday, Wednesday, one of the days when nobody ought to give entertainments of any kind, when every body ought to be devout and pious, and never think of eating and drinking, or listening to music, he found, on looking into the *Morning Post*, that this very Wednesday in Lent several grand entertainments had been given. In the first place, there was a grand dinner given in support of Drury Lane Theatrical Fund (*hear, hear!*) which was a sort of broad farce, with musical entertainments added, to which those who subscribed three guineas were admitted. A very illustrious individual (the Duke of Cambridge) presided at the dinner, and the whole went off with what the papers called the extreme of conviviality. (*Loud laughter.*) In the course of the evening some songs were sung by several distinguished vocalists who were present; among others, a parody "on Rory O'More," (*Hear! hear and a laugh,*) and after that Mr. Rice—(*A laugh*)—he did not know which Mr. Rice, but he was de-

scribed as the 'real Jim Crow'—(*Shouts of laughter from all parts of the house,*)—sang, 'Such a gitting up stairs,' with three encores—(*Roars of laughter,*)—and then 'Jim Crow,' with some new verses, which, as the *Post* said 'we obtained, but for which we have no space.' Rice was warmly received, (*laughter,*) and, after the departure of the Duke of Cambridge, was voted into the chair to sustain the conviviality of the 'after evening.' (*Hear, hear!*) Now this took place the day before, on a Wednesday in Lent. Well, then, he looked a little farther, to see what was going on in the Palace, (*a laugh,*) and he found that on that day her Majesty had a very large dinner-party, and that in the evening the band of the Life-guards entertained the party with music. (*Cheers and laughter.*) At this meeting there was a great number of distinguished individuals, and the very first name among them was, that of the Marquis Conyngham, the *arbiter elegantiarum*, the *custos morum* of the city of Westminster.—(*Laughter and cheers.*) Far be it from him (Mr. Duncombe) to suggest that the Lord Chamberlain did not point out the inconsistency to her Majesty, and he was therefore warranted in assuming that the Lord Chamberlain did suggest to her Majesty that the royal party was doing exactly the very thing which he had forbidden in the city of Westminster. Well, then, he looked a little farther to see what was going on in what was called high society, and he found it stated in the *Morning Post*, the organ of fashionable life, that the Marquis of Lansdowne had a grand dinner-party on Wednesday. (*Hear, hear! and laughter.*) Still he went a little farther, for he wanted to see how the church was occupied, and he found it stated that yesterday, Wednesday in Lent, the Bishop of Landaff gave an elegant dinner (*Loud laughter*) at the deanery, St. Paul's to a large circle of gentlemen connected with his lordship's diocese. (*Renewed laughter.*) Now, when the people of the city of Westminster saw how others occupied themselves on the Wednesdays in Lent, he wanted to know whether they had not a just reason to complain if they were not able to enjoy the rational amusement they saw others enjoying? They did not grudge her Majesty the band of the Life-guards. All they asked for was to be allowed to pay for their own band, and to listen to it in the boxes of Drury lane Theatre. He could not understand what ground there was for refusing his motion, but he understood that it was to be refused. There was no law in favour of the Lord Chamberlain's conduct; it had only custom to support it." After referring to an opinion to this effect given by Sir J. Scarlett, and to the 10th George II., the hon. member went on to say, that if the Lord Chamberlain had a right to shut up the theatres in the city of Westminster on the Wednesdays and Fridays

during Lent, they ought to be shut up throughout the town. As to the plea of custom, that was not valid. How many old customs were there, which day after day were abandoned? He could give the house instances of many old Lenten customs, which had now very properly been abolished. For instance, what was the Lenten custom in the time of George II., at the time when the bill to which he had referred was passed? At that time there was one of the officers of the royal household who was denominated the King's cock-crower. (*Loud laughter.*) It was the duty of this exalted individual, during Lent, to crow the hours of the night, which at other times were proclaimed by the watchman. It however happened, that one night the Prince of Wales had a supper-party, when the King's cock-crower passed under his window, and, according to custom, crowed the hour. The Prince not aware of the custom, and not understanding the language, (*a laugh,*) took these sounds as a personal insult, attacked the unfortunate officer, and nearly strangled him; and it was some time before he recovered. This accident called forth the grave consideration of the court and the court circle, and the result was, that this very absurd custom was abolished. (*Hear, hear!*) But if old customs were always to be kept up, he did not see why the Lord Chamberlain should not revive the King's cock-crower. He believed he had stated what were the grievances of which the people of Westminster had to complain. In France a large sum of money was voted from the public purse for the support of the theatres, and they had the theatres rent-free. His clients did not ask for money from the public purse, nor to live rent-free; all they asked was, to be put upon an equality with the other parts of the metropolis. (*Hear, hear!*) The only ground on which the restriction was defended was, that the custom was an old vestige of Popery, and that it afforded the Lord Chamberlain an opportunity of displaying a petty tyranny, to the great inconvenience of her Majesty's subjects in the city of Westminster. He would therefore move, 'That it is the opinion of this house that during Lent no greater restrictions should be placed upon theatrical entertainments within the city of Westminster than are placed upon the like amusements at the same period in every other part of the metropolis.'—(*Loud cheers.*)

After the introduction of a variety of nonsensical arguments by Lord John Russell, Lord Teignmouth, Sir James Graham, (out of charity to Lord John,) and Mr. Spring Rice, Mr. Duncombe returned to the attack in the same amusing strain, with the natural result from a display of such downright fun, and better still, such striking truths:

"Mr. T. Duncombe, in reply, denied that he had made the comparison imputed to him by the noble lord, the member for Marylebone, between a theatre full of prostitutes and a dinner-party at a bishop's house. He had not pretended to say what sort of company might be at such a dinner-party.—(*Laughter.*) As to the observance of Wednesdays and Fridays, he would ask, did the noble lord happen to know that the illustrious consort of the Duke of Cambridge was at the Queen's Theatre on Friday last? (*Hear, hear.*) The hon. baronet, the member for Pembroke, was mistaken in supposing that it was in the city of Westminster only that the Lord Chamberlain had jurisdiction. There were the theatres-royal York, Manchester, Brighton, and other towns throughout England; and over all these the Lord Chamberlain had jurisdiction, if he thought proper to exercise it. But, to show the caprice with which this jurisdiction was exercised, he would just mention one fact. The year before last, in the theatre at Brighton, which is right opposite the Pavilion, DURING THE TIME THE LORD CHAMBERLAIN WAS THERE, the following pieces were performed on *Ash Wednesday!* 'Charles XII.,' 'The Maid of Switzerland,' and 'The Vampire!' (*Hear, and laughter.*) The noble lord, the member for Marylebone, had shifted the question from his own shoulders, and had gone to the Bishop of London, and asked him what he thought of allowing theatrical performances on Wednesdays and Fridays during Lent, and the bishop very naturally replied, that it would be a heavy blow to the Protestant church. (*Laughter.*) The noble lord, the Secretary for the Home Department, had said he would not care if the resolution had passed. Did the noble lord not care? Only let the house give him (Mr. T. Duncombe) that resolution, and he would then try whether he could not make the noble lord attend to it.—(*Laughter and cheers.*) The noble lord should not attempt to set the house, or the representatives of the people in that house, at defiance. He might imagine that he was taking time by the forelock in assuming such a tone; but he (Mr. T. Duncombe) was not sure of that. Perhaps the opinion of the house would not only be found against the noble lord on this occasion, but it might soon tend to remove the noble lord and his colleagues from the benches they now occupied.—(*Cheers.*) To continue the present system of things, would, as the noble viscount, the member for Durham, had observed, only be downright hypocrisy, and a gross absurdity.—*Cheers, and cries of 'Question.'*

The house then divided, when the numbers appeared—

For the previous question	- - -	72
Against it	- - -	92
Majority	- - -	—20

The announcement of the numbers was received with tumultuous cheers.

In consequence of this unexpected manifestation of the opinion of the House of Commons, the following correspondence passed between Mr. Duncombe and myself:

“ Theatre Royal Drury Lane, March 1, 1839.

“ SIR,

“ I take the liberty of inquiring whether the result of your motion last evening in the House of Commons (to remove the restriction on this theatre in Lent) be correctly reported in the morning papers?

“ While I ask this question for the regulation of my next week's entertainments, I avail myself of the opportunity afforded me of saying, that the theatrical community owe you a heavy debt of gratitude.

“ I have the honour to be, Sir,

“ Your obedient humble servant,

“ A. BUNN.”

“ To T. Duncombe, Esq., M.P.”

“ The Albany, March 2, 1839.

“ SIR,

“ The report to which you allude is, I believe, perfectly correct.

“ I enclose a copy of the resolution agreed to by the House of Commons:

“ ‘ That it is the opinion of this house, that during Lent no greater restrictions should be placed on theatrical establishments within the city of Westminster, than are placed upon the like amusements at the same period, in every other part of the metropolis.’

“ It seems to me impossible, after this deliberate proceeding of the House of Commons, that the Lord Chamberlain should any longer interpose his *veto* to the farther injury of those who have already suffered so much by the course which the House of Commons has condemned. The words of the Act show that the subject is wholly in the discretion of the Lord Chamberlain: he may, *if he pleases*, and without any appeal from this decision, put a stop to all theatrical amusements in Westminster, AT ALL TIMES. The Act does not specify the Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent, nor any other days or day in the year, but places absolute powers of prohibition in the hands of the Lord Chamberlain.

“ It is, therefore, I repeat, a mere question of discretion, and



I cannot for a moment imagine that this officer of the court will exercise his discretion in positive defiance of the recorded opinion of the House of Commons.

"In allusion to the latter paragraph of your letter, I must be allowed to say, that the theatrical community who have been cruelly deprived of their bread, and the people of Westminster who have been absurdly deprived of a rational amusement, are not indebted to any individual, but to the common sense of the majority who voted on this question.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your obedient and faithful servant,

"T. S. DUNCOMBE."

"Alfred Bunn, Esq.,

"Theatre Royal Drury Lane."

My object in addressing Mr. Duncombe was to elicit the exact position of the case from him, rather than to trust to newspaper report, because upon the truth of that report depended my own position. Concurring with that part of Mr. Duncombe's letter on which he deems it impossible that the Lord Chamberlain should any longer oppose his *veto* to our performing on Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent, I made arrangements for opening Drury Lane Theatre on those evenings, and began by engaging the whole band, which had rendered the Musard concerts so popular at the English Opera House. Though announced merely to give a concert, its performance was interdicted; and I therefore took the bull by the horns, and advertised the full opera of *Farinelli* for Friday March 8th. The interdiction which closed the theatre on the previous Wednesday, March 6th, was conveyed from the Lord Chamberlain's office "by direction of her Majesty's ministers;" but by what Act of Parliament, or by what authority, they thought proper to interfere with the business, I have not the remotest conception. However, to bring the matter altogether to issue, for the satisfaction of the many noble advisers who favoured me with their opinions upon that subject, and for my own guidance in the matter, I made official inquiry of the Lord Chamberlain, from whose office this despatch was received:

"Lord Chamberlain's Office, March 6, 1839.

"SIR,

"With reference to your letter to me of yesterday, I am directed by the Lord Chamberlain to state, that the communication made to you was intended distinctly to convey a prohibi-

tion against any other than the usual performance of oratorios on the Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent.

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"WILLIAM MARTINS."

"A. Bunn Esq.

"Theatre Royal Drury Lane."

Upon the receipt of this, my announcement was finally withdrawn, and we sneaked out of the affair in the most unbecoming humility; but the honourable member for Finsbury did not naturally choose to let it sneak out of the House of Commons in the same manner; and therefore, on the 11th of March, he brought forward the business again. In the mean time, the feelings and opinions of the community at large became considerably agitated; and being conveyed through the medium of the metropolitan and provincial press, gained ground every hour. I have not space for the insertion of all their doctrines, largely as I subscribe to them, and convinced as I am that every reader I may be fortunate enough to find would do the same: but as a sample, I cannot resist inserting the subjoined animadversion from the pages of the *Morning Chronicle*, written with admirable spirit, taste, and truth:

"Morning Chronicle, Feb. 27, 1839.

"It is singular that at the present season the most religious people in Westminster, and *à fortiori* in all England, should be the poor players. They alone keep Lent, and fast on Wednesdays and Fridays. They alone abstain from their usual occupations on those days, and forfeit their usual gains. They neither work nor play. Where shall we find the like piety? The clubs are all open in the west; the city is upon 'Change in the east; parliament sits, both Lords and Commons, and not a lie the less is told even in a court of law; bishops dine, though we deny not that their chaplains say grace over salt fish; and the band of the Coldstream guards is redolent of musical profanity in the purlieus of the palace. The players are at the summit of sanctity. In primitive times, long gone by, Christians gave to the poor the meals from which they themselves abstained; but the poor actors leave the unpaid price of their uneaten meals in the pockets of their wealthier patrons.

"The worst of it is, that this ascetic pre-eminence is enforced. Roscius does not desire the pillar of *Simeon Stylites* for his pedestal. All through Lent he is lusting for the flesh-pots of Egypt. The corps dramatique is forced into the front rank of the fasting host, to cover the bishops and their clergy in the

rear. It is a forlorn hope by conscription, and not by volunteering—a very forlorn hope, and not ‘misnamed.’ Surely we should have thought that the church of England had willing piety enough amongst its members to make Lent a holy season, and needed not the seasoning of persecution to its salt fish, by thus enforcing the pains of penance where they are alleviated by the merit of obedience.

“The question is not so much ecclesiastical as topographical. Why is there toleration at Tottenham for what would be desecration at Drury? Why is the performance not sinful at the Surrey, that would be deadly at the Adelphi?—and why may Shakspeare be disfigured all over the country, so that he is not illustrated at Covent Garden? The Lord Chamberlain seems to confound the boundaries of parishes with the boundaries of virtue, and to take Temple Bar as a barricade against profanity. Westminster is his Holy Land. But Palestine was enriched by Providence for the piety of its possessors, while the Lord Chamberlain impoverishes the Westminster theatres by the abstinence he enforces on their tenants. If Lord John Russell does not feel it his duty to advise the Chamberlain to lower his piety, he should feel it his duty to advise the Duke of Bedford to lower his rent.

“There is an old story of a footman applying for a place, who had no objection to family prayer, provided his master remembered it in his wages. Let ‘her Majesty’s servants’ be treated with similar liberality. Neither Church nor Chamberlain ought to refuse to make up their curtailed emoluments from fees or tithes. It is a public disgrace to allow our piety to be paid for by the players; to borrow their shoulders for the burden of our Lent; and render our sanctity a public saving out of the earnings of actors and the salaries of scene shifters.

“This very trumpery affair ought to have been set right the moment it was mentioned. The prohibition is as absurd, and almost as cruel, as the old law for the drawing all the teeth of any one who should be convicted of eating flesh in Lent. That dramatic exhibition is any greater offence against the sacredness of the season than ten thousand things that are daily done in every street, is an argument which it is strange that any man should hold with a grave face. Theatres, properly managed, and amply patronised, are amongst the most powerful agencies of civilization. We respect, nevertheless, the religious prejudice that denounce them altogether. But no such respect is due to the inconsistency that, according to mere locality, allows them to be open, or commands them to be closed: to the hypocrisy that, from whatever motives or influences, upholds an arbitrary custom under the pretence of piety; or to the injustice that

subjects any class of persons to peculiar needless and unmerited privation.

“The Church of England received the Lent fast, with many other observances, from the Church of Rome, by which it had been extended from forty hours to forty days before Easter. But, in general, the Church of England has interpreted this observance, as it has the rest, with considerable latitude and liberality. All serious interference with health, or business, or any rational enjoyment (except that of a theatre within a certain district) has been judiciously avoided. Why, then, continue this injurious exception? We have called it a trumpety affair, as only relating to the amusements of some six or eight thousands per night, and the receipts of some two thousands or thereabouts. But no affair is trumpety which involves hypocrisy on the one part, and injury on the other. We like not the maxim *de minimis non curat lex*, especially if it be construed ‘players are below the protecting care of parliament.’ Our theatrical system needs revision, especially as to the privileges of the patent theatres, and the anomalous authority exercised by the Lord Chamberlain. If there be any truth, and we believe there is deep and important truth, in the importance assigned to the fine arts as purifying the manners of a people, this subject deserves more attention than it has hitherto received from legislators and reformers.”

This article was sent forth to the public on Wednesday the 27th of February, one of the lenten evenings of prohibition, on which the memorable princely fête at Goodwood was given to celebrate the attainment of his majority by the Earl of March. Without the slightest disparagement to the hospitality or morality of his grace the Duke of Richmond, whose noble and expanded views laugh to scorn the narrow ribaldry, for it is nothing else, put forth and maintained this prohibition, the opportunity was too tempting to be passed by, and accordingly a few days after, the following notice, coupling the two circumstances, appeared in the same newspaper:

“THE MODE IN WHICH THE CLERGY OBSERVE LENT.\*

“The *Brighton Herald* of Saturday last contains an account of the more than princely fête at Goodwood, on Wednesday last, the 27th of February, the day the Earl of March attained his majority. The ball seems to have been attended by half the aristocracy of the kingdom. The dancing, we are told, commenced shortly after ten o’clock, and the last carriage did

\* Morning Chronicle, March 6th, 1839.

not leave till a quarter past seven o'clock. The names are all given, and we should recommend it as an excellent clerical guide; for we question if a single beneficed clergyman of the county was not present with his family.

"The Bishop of Chichester could not attend the ball, being at his post in London, but his family were there, including Mrs., Miss, and Mr. Otter.

"The following names of clergymen, which we have culled from the account, is peculiarly instructive as to the opinion of the Church of England, that the abstinence from all secular amusements is due to the established religion of the country on Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent:

- " Rev. Henry Atkins.
- Rev. Mr., Mrs., and the two Misses Bradford.
- Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Buckner.
- Rev. J. Blackeston.
- 5 Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Batson.
- Rev. Mr., Mrs., and the Misses Bayton.
- Rev. S. and Mrs. Brown.
- Rev. Mr. Broadwood.
- Rev. Mr. Bethuen.
- 10 Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Cooper.
- Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Collins.
- Rev. Mr. Caunter.
- Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Clark.
- Rev. Mr. Calhoun.
- 15 The Rev. Mr. and Mrs. S. Douglas.
- Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Deacon, the Misses Deacon,
- " Mrs. J. Deacon, and Mr. Henry Deacon.
- Rev. Mr., Mrs., and the Misses Elmes.
- Rev. Mr., Mrs., and Miss Eedle.
- Rev. Mr. Fairless.
- 20 Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Green, Rogate.
- Rev. Mr. and the Misses Green, Ruslington.
- Rev. Mr. Green Oving.
- Rev. Mr. Howe.
- Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Holland.
- 25 Rev. W. and Mrs. Holland.
- Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson.
- Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Kinleside.
- Rev. C. Klanert.
- Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Lyne.
- 30 Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Luxford.
- Rev. Henry Legge.
- Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Langdon.

- Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Malthus.  
 Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Murray.  
 35 Rev. Mr. Munsor.  
 Rev. W. and Mrs. Miller.  
 Rev. Mr. Mackie.  
 Rev. Mr. Miller.  
 Rev. Mr. Newland.  
 40 Rev. G. and Mrs. Porcher.  
 Rev. R. Powell.  
 Rev. J., Mrs., and Miss Pannell.  
 Rev. Mr. Rasinghill.  
 Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Roberts.  
 45 Rev. G. Smith.  
 Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Schomberg.  
 Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Tredcroft.  
 Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Thornton.  
 Rev. William Turner.  
 50 Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Twyford.  
 Rev. J. Tuffnell.  
 Rev. Mr. Thompson.  
 Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Witherly.  
 Rev. Henry and Mrs. Wood.  
 55 Rev. G. Woods.  
 Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Watkins.  
 Archdeacon and Mrs. Webber.  
 Rev. C. Webber.  
 59 Rev. Mr. and Miss Wells.

Mr. Duncombe's motion, on the 11th of March, was to the following effect:—

“This House learns with regret and surprise that her Majesty's ministers have thought fit to interfere with the wholly unfettered discretion which the legislature has been pleased to vest in the Lord Chamberlain, with respect to theatrical entertainments in Westminster, by directing that officer of her Majesty's household so to exercise his discretionary authority as to defeat the manifest object of a resolution of the Commons House of Parliament.”

But the motion was withdrawn after a short debate, on the understanding that the question would be considered, as regards the hereafter. As Lent is coming on, we shall see. What a scene of ridicule if they give in, and what a scene of deceit if they do not! In the course of the debate, Lord John Russell thought proper to make these observations upon me:—

"In the present instance Mr. Bunn, according to one of the letters that had been called for, thought proper to incur considerable expense, upon that resolution being adopted by the house. He would say, with all due regard to resolutions of that house, that they were not to be allowed to set aside either the law of the land, or the prerogatives of the crown! (*Hear!*) Therefore when one of the lessees, namely, of Drury Lane, chose to advertise that there would be performances on future Wednesdays and Fridays, the Lord Chamberlain (acting under the sanction of her Majesty's ministers) informed Mr. Bunn that such performances could not be countenanced or allowed—he would repeat that he thought they were perfectly justified in acting as they had (*hear, hear!*) and he certainly conceived, that if they had proceeded otherwise, if they had recognized a resolution of that house as so sufficient upon a trifling case of this kind, they would but have established a precedent most injurious to the proceedings of Parliament, and the prerogative of the crown. Mr. Bunn, it appeared, held in contempt, and set at nought, the prerogative of the crown."

One is obliged sometimes to remember what "the insolence of office" forgets: and as a very little man, armed with a great deal of authority, can do a great deal of mischief, I did not think proper to indulge as freely in reply as I could have wished; and contented myself therefore with issuing this rejoinder:

*"To the Editor of the Morning Herald, Wednesday, March 13, 1839.*

"SIR,

"This morning's papers reporting Lord John Russell to have asserted last evening, in the House of Commons, that 'Mr. Bunn had set at nought the prerogative of the crown,' I request the indulgence of your journal to detail the simple facts of the case. I had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Duncombe the day after the correspondence which had passed between us upon the success of his motion in the House of Commons, when he stated his belief, that if Drury Lane Theatre were opened on the following Wednesday, no interference would take place on behalf of the Chamberlain's office; and he gave me as his reason for such belief, that he had understood persons connected with the government (I think he named Mr. Fox Maule) had publicly stated as much. In consequence of this communication, my announcement was made; when to my astonishment I received the next day the letter from the Lord Chamber-

lain's office, already published. I did not refuse to comply with the pleasure of her Majesty's ministers therein contained, (though it was the first time their names had been used in any communication from that office to this theatre;) I merely stated that I could not comply without great loss; and on the receipt of a distinct prohibition, I submitted to that loss.

"I therefore beg to say, that if the report in question be correct, Lord John Russell has taken an unjustifiable liberty with my name, in asserting that 'I have set at nought the prerogative of the crown,' for her Majesty has not a more loyal or devoted subject in all her dominions, than

"Your obedient humble servant,

"A. BUNN, *Lessee*."

"Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,

"March 12, 1839."

After all this tomfoolery, what would the reader like? A good laugh would be too great a compliment—a sneeze would be too troublesome; in sober truth, a lament—a lament is nearer the mark; for as sure as fate,

"This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle,  
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,  
This other Eden, demi-paradise,  
This fortress, built by nature for herself,  
Against infection and the hand of war,  
This happy breed of men, this little world,  
This precious stone set in the silver sea,  
Which serves it in the office of a wall,  
Or as a moat defensive to a house  
Against the envy of less happier lands;  
This blessed spot, this earth, this realm, this ENGLAND,"

will speedily go to the devil if the persons permitted to sway its destiny do not occupy themselves about something better than such an immense quantity of rubbish as is contained in the foregoing compendium of some of their proceedings.



## CHAPTER X.

Posthumous opera by Sheridan—How to pay a coal-merchant's account—Poole in a pucker, and Reynolds unable to get him out of it—Judgment upon manuscripts—Gratitude of performers—To what account it was turned—Fashionable booksellers and one of their fashionable dinners, reported in verse—Death of Boaden—Death of Nourrit—Duponchet and Duprez—Neither emphasis nor discretion in the generality of singers—A sure way to make up one's losses—A good dinner and the good effects of one—Deer-stalking—Monsieur Scribe and Monsieur Bunn, Monsieur Auber and Monsieur Balfe—Rehearsals on the French stage—How a prima donna renews her engagement—An author's vanity and interest at variance—The small of your back.

A SLIGHT reference has already been made to the entanglement in which the manager of the winter theatres too frequently find himself with authors. At this time an offer, previously made, was renewed, of two posthumous dramatic works by Sheridan, for which, as it may reasonably be supposed, a considerable, but not too large, a sum of money was required. The former stipulation of not giving up the MSS. until the money was paid (on the prudent plan laid down by Sir E. L. Bulwer) was subsequently abandoned; and I had therefore an opportunity of consulting a gentleman on the subject, quite capable of decyphering one of the charms which it was stated the said MSS. contained, viz. Sheridan's handwriting. Mr. Dunn knew as much of Sheridan as any man in existence—living at one time under the same roof with him, and being always in his fullest confidence. Pretty pickings from that said confidence, if one could only extract them! Billy drops an instalment\*

\* Mr. Robert Mitchell, who supplied Sheridan with coals, had a heavy demand against him, long outstanding, and for which he was bent upon waiting no longer. Mr. Dunn, therefore, finding remonstrance useless, undertook to pilot the coal-merchant to Sheridan's residence in Hertford-street, and to usher him into the manager's presence. Mitchell attacked Sheridan mercilessly, accused him of having treated him shamefully, and swore he would not leave the house without the whole of his money. As the amount was several hundred pounds, and Sheridan had not as many shillings, compliance was more easily demanded than obtained, and it was consequently necessary to resort to stratagem—with what success this dialogue will determine.

*Sheridan.*—"True, my dear Bob, true all you say—I'm really very sorry, but I say, Bob, you don't want it ALL to-day, hey? won't a part do?"

*Mitchell.*—"No, sir, it won't—I will have it all—I must—I darn't go

now and then, and there are plenty of people ready to pick it up. It was Mr. Dunn's opinion that a part of one of the pieces was in Sheridan's writing, but that the rest decidedly was not. He moreover had never heard either work named, or even remotely hinted at; and wound up his observations by one of his usually shrewd remarks which settled my enthusiasm in a minute. He stated that to the best of his belief, not only had Sheridan raised every farthing he possibly could upon every line he had ever written, but that there were wags to be found capable of asserting that he had raised a great deal upon what he had never written. This may be all erroneous, and God forbid that I should underrate any composition, particularly one supposed to emanate from such an inspired source; and as the dramatic productions in question are still, I presume, in existence, and if so, still of course to be purchased, I should be sorry to undervalue them.

It is a hard task to deal with quacks of the quill—still harder to deal with writers of acknowledged powers and merit. My worthy friend Poole once sent me a piece which, on perusal I felt assured would fail. It is a ticklish thing to reject the work of so able an author as Mr. Poole; for not only do you call in question *his* capabilities of composition, but *your own* capabilities of judgment. In apprizing Poole of my misgivings, he was not only naturally disappointed, but unnaturally indignant, and sent a mutual friend, (and a d—d good judge by the way,) John Hamilton Reynolds to expostulate with me. He could not have pitched upon a better man, one who has, to use a familiar

home without every farthing of it. My wife is distracted, my house is beset with creditors, ruin is staring me in the face, and by G— I will not leave this room without my money."

*Sheridan.*—"Come' come, Bob, you are rather too hard upon me—to be sure you have drawn a distressing picture, and I am much concerned by it—wouldn't half do to-day, and a bill for the remainder—hey, Bob?"

*Mitchell.*—"Not a farthing less than my whole bill, Mr. Sheridan; as I said before—I dare not show my face at home without it."

*Sheridan (pausing and then apparently much moved.)* "Then would to heaven I could assist you! I cannot—but (*and here he took a deep dip into his pocket,*) one thing I can, I will, I ought to do—there," (*taking Mitchell's hand, shaking it, and putting something in it,*) "there—never let it be said, that while Sheridan had a guinea in his pocket, he refused it to his friend *Bob Mitchell*." Sheridan seemed agitated, Mitchell stood aghast for a minute or two, then carefully tucked up the guinea in a corner of his leather breeches pocket, forgot his wrongs, and with a familiar expression of "*Bob*" ringing in his ears, he bolted out of the house, and to the latest hour of his life was in an occasional moment of enthusiasm, fond of displaying "*the last guinea his friend Sheridan had in the world!*" This is perhaps the greatest feat Sheridan ever did, except when he softened an attorney.

saying, more stuff in his little finger than is to be found in the heads, put together, of one half of those he is compelled to associate with, and who by such association should rise up wiser and wittier than they sat down. I put the piece in Reynold's hands, with this observation, "Read it yourself, and if you say I ought to act it, I *will*." As Reynolds could not say so, I could not act it; and it subsequently came out at the Haymarket, where it "died and made no sign."

But a slight summary of pieces sent to the management of a London theatre for examination, and in the hopes of approval, during a very short period, will give my present reader some rough idea of what a past reader of mine had to wade through. I do not refer to mine excellent and dearly beloved friend Frederick Reynolds, who is "alive," and though through infirmity not "kicking," in comparatively good health, but to poor Morton, now "gathered round the hearthstone of his ancestors," and whose farther drolleries, therefore, I may be pardoned for introducing, in addition to a very amusing one given in an earlier part of this book. Mr. Morton returned me, after a careful examination of their pretensions, a packet of manuscripts with his remarks attached to the name of each. The list ran thus:—

*Paired Off*.—The plan, characters, and dialogue of this piece are by no means objectionable, but I fear it is not up to the mark, for the breadth necessary for a one act piece. The part intended for Mrs. Glover is tame, and what she *could* or *would* do nothing with.

*Nicolas Pedrossa*.—Sad stuff—to be returned.

*The Adventurers*.—Not worth adventuring—sure to be damned.

*Saucy Alceste*.—This piece must belong to my worthy friend Thompson. I have unhappily wrecked so many of his pieces, that my spirit is grieved when I am compelled to say, I do not think this up to the mark. Do a good-natured action, by doing an ill-natured one—take the burden of the refusal on your own sufficient shoulders—for poor as I am I would give five guineas, if I could honestly say the *Saucy Alceste* would be wafted into Port Drury, by the *aura popularis* of public favour.

*Perversion*.—Cannot be acted.

*Theory and Practice*.—The subject of this play is paper money—but the author's MSS. can never be changed into cash.

*The Chimney-piece*.—Is a fair farce, and smartly written; the only danger in the piece is the FAR TOO FREQUENT mention of Mrs. Horn. A certain author says, "Push the duke as far as

he'll go;" Mrs. Horn, is pushed too far, and verifies Sheridan's words, "when these fellows get hold of a good thing, they never know when they've enough of it." I have penciled at the end a finishing speech, which, if the author pleases, is at his service. (N.B. This was by Rodwell, and was played with much success.—A.B.)

*The way to get Mad.*—May be returned to Mr. Heaven-knows-who, for I can't even make out the author's name but his address is ———.

*Woman.*—An elegant bit of French comedy—the intrigue clever, the dialogue smart and nimble. In the hands of Gautier, Lafont, and Neontine Fay, it could not fail of being effective—but (d—n it, there's always a "but") Sir Harry Hutton would be far too gay for Farren, and Cooper could not be feathery enough for *Sir George*, nor would the blandishments of *Lady Emily* be ably sustained by Miss Phillips. Its merits (could it be well played,) I think entitle it to a hearing; but whether that hearing would reward the theatre, you as manager must determine.

*Everybody's Relation.*—I cannot be in love with the piece, whatever I might be with the lady writer.

*Whitefeet.*—This piece is quite unfitted for representation.

*Oratory Tablet.*—This I had read, but the contents had escaped my recollection—a bad sign. It is another sad instance of the misapplication of powers to an ungrateful subject. In my opinion, its acceptance could answer no good purpose to either manager or author.

*The Iron Shroud.*—Avoid it.

*Radulph.*—An old acquaintance, but he does not improve upon it.

*Panthea.*—Read the last page! (I did so, and found that six people stabbed themselves in less than six minutes, and four of them were eunuchs! A. B.)

*The Ballot.*—Written by O'Keefe, in 1809, when nothing was left of his genius but its irregularities and its vulgarities.

*The Baron.*—Written by his daughter; contains many snatches of talent, but overlaid by mystery and quantity.

*Edelbert.*—Respectably written—but of what use to Drury Lane would a *respectable Saxon* TRAGEDY be? Certainly none.

*The Assassin.*—Is unskilful and unavailable.

*The Day of Mishaps.*—A farce in one act. Should this piece be started, it could only live by its activity. It is a stage coach, and though without a drag, it would not be overturned—but I could not warrant it a run—perhaps *I've lost my place* might be a smarter title to it.

*Imbio, or the Requital.*—Nonsense.

*The Refusal.*—No better.

*The Nervous Man.*—A farce rewritten, introducing a new first act, with a new character, for Power. I think it improved by the alteration; if you think with me, I suppose the Dons Farren and Power must be consulted. (Written by Bernard, and acted with much success.—A. B.)

*Prince of Naples.*—Won't do—any one but you!

*The Two Catherines.*—The perusal took me more time to understand than half-a-dozen better ones; and after all, the ridicule was not worth finding out. It cannot be used.

*Pyramus and Thisbe.*—This I have seen or read somewhere—it is whimsical and fairly farcical; but this *dissection* of the stage I have never seen answer.

*The Post Obit of Fame.*

“DEAR BUNN.”

“This sad evidence of the wreck of genius made me melancholy; you may say, when the age is in the wit is out. I deny it, and am proving it, by achieving what no existing author dare attempt—namely, a five act comedy.

“T. M.”

*One fool makes Many.*—The author, I am sorry to say, is one of “the many.”

*The Dead Alive.*—Quite hopeless.

*Murtoch M<sup>c</sup>Griffin and O'Dogharty in Spain.*—The merit this piece has consists in an intimate knowledge of the manners, localities, and habits of Spaniards—warlike and domestic—but the essentials of passion and dramatic interest are not in sufficient force. I think the author overrates his Irish hero. He has called on me, telling me Power has reduced the piece from five to two acts, “at one fell swoop;” it might not be condemned, but could not be attractive.

*Matilda de Shabran.*—If an opinion (supported by experience) be true viz.: that no music will succeed unless bot-tomed by a good drama, then this piece is hopeless—next, in reply to the convertability of the music into *Roxalana*, I should say it could not effectively be done, for the Sultan is purely comic. The music of this piece must be, from the nature of the piece, heroic, warlike; for there are dungeons, battlements, and the other clamorous accompaniments which could not fit what is positively comedy. As for *my* piece on the subject, I (as you may guess) converted the *Comedy* into *Farce*, which removes to a greater distance the character of the two pieces. Mine was all *breadth* and *breeches* for Madame Vestris.

*Swamp Hall.*—This piece I have either read or seen, as all the circumstances are familiar to me. Won't do at all.

*The Baby*.—Hasty and trivial—the inviting thing is the title, which I think a good one; but the business is commonplace.

*Podesta*.—This play could not be advantageously acted. The plot is complicated—to an audience inexplicable; it has all the confusion of an Italian feud: but none of the grandeur of a *Fiesco*, or a *Foscari*. There is some poetry, some dramatic power, and some dramatic situations, but not enough to balance the defects.

*By the King's Order*.—A bustling affair, but very dangerous: as when there is *any* hope, however small, I never wish to exclude it, it may be worth while for you to run it over. (N. B. I *did* run it over, and found *none*.—A. B.)

*Marriage à-la-Mode*.—As far as embodying the pictures of Hogarth, the piece is well contrived, but the agency of dialogue is very dull, and unrelieved by the least gleam of gaiety. A recollection of the paintings will convince you that coarseness and the tragic effects of adultery and murder are dangerous tools to handle dramatically. As a drama (independently of pictorial reference) it is very humble.

*Women as they are*.—Are very bad.

This list comprises but a small batch of the many I was favoured with from my facetious and yet discerning officer. Having passed away from the stage of life,\* to the infinite regret of all lovers of the other stage, his writings had so long adorned and upheld, the publication of these his comments “cannot touch him farther;” and to prevent the possibility of annoying the living, I have studiously avoided mentioning the names of the authors. The declaration of the titles of their pieces will serve two purposes; it will enable the authors of them to improve upon what was imperfect, and managers to avoid their many imperfections. It may, therefore, readily be believed that where some hundreds of pieces of the quality herein described are submitted to the decision of the manager of a theatre, the task of deciding, to say nothing of reading, is quite harassing enough.

On the day of my last benefit in Drury Lane Theatre, (March 7, 1839,) the subjoined letter was addressed to me, signed by every member of the company; and as the devil is invariably painted blacker than he is, it is here introduced in testimony of such an ancient and respectable adage:

\* Another respectable, though uninspired, writer for the stage, at the period when Morton so amused the town, died this season. Mr. Boaden was a man of excellent taste, a scholar, and a passable dramatist—but pompous and prosy.

" TO ALFRED BUNN, ESQ.

" Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,  
" March 7th, 1839.

" DEAR SIR,

" We, the undersigned performers, &c. of Drury Lane Theatre, take this opportunity of expressing the great satisfaction we have derived in witnessing the spirit, enterprise, and unremitting industry evinced by you during a season replete with difficulties—difficulties which your activity, talent, and manly perseverance, could have alone overcome. As a very small and inadequate testimonial of the feeling by which we are all animated, we request of you to accept our best services *gratuitously* on the night of your benefit, with the warmest wishes that the receipts of the house may exceed your most sanguine expectations.

" We remain,

" Dear Sir,

" Your faithful Servants."

(Here follow the signatures of the entire company.)

As a matter of course I subjoin my reply, and very much regret that the necessities of the treasury were such, that I returned into it the handsome sum this suspension of a night's salary came to, to enable me to pay the salaries of its subscribers, instead of expending it, as I wished to do, on some memorial of their good feeling:

" Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,  
" March 7th, 1839.

" LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

" I have received your letter of this day's date, more complimentary to me from the spirit of its contents than from any pecuniary value that could possibly be attached to them. The approbation of so many professors, (most of whom have toiled so many years with me,) imparts a feeling of more real gratification than any event of my life.

" Great as have been, and are, the difficulties to contend with, and useful as your handsome contribution might be, I prefer expending it on some token whereupon may be engraved, as the memory of it is on my heart, the names of those who have done me so much honour.

" Believe me,

" Ladies and Gentlemen,

" Your obliged and faithful friend,

" A. BUNN."

On the same day a curious and equally agreeable circumstance happened—(indeed on this day one disagreeable circumstance occurred, which to a *bénéficier* is particularly so, viz. that it snowed without cessation both day and night.) It is not unknown to the public generally, but especially to persons of *ton*, that several fashionable librarians at the west-end of the metropolis are extensive speculators in theatres. The principal parties are Messrs. Andrews, Sams, Mitchell, Ebers, and Hookham. The first three are large dealers, the first two the largest, and considered to be the wealthiest and most important. This may appear very strange to the uninitiated, who may not be able to understand what one man can have to do with another man's business, and above all, with such an exclusive kind of business as all theatrical business must be: but they may depend upon it there is barely one of the gentlemen herein named, who would not rather give up the proceeds of his own calling, than resign all connexion with mine.

There is a class of people in this town (as elicited in the recited conversation of a lady of rank with Charles Kean) who affect not to know where a theatre is, unless they obtain their information "at the library;" and having obtained it, would not even drive, much less walk, there, although it should be considerably nearer their own houses than the said library. There are more reasons than one for this assumed affectation; but the principal reason after all is, that if they take their boxes at the office of the theatres, they must exhibit their purses; but if they go to Bond Street, or to the corner of St. James's Street, their names get into the books of the manager and the librarian at the same time. CREDIT, credit is the great consideration with this part of the community. Putting your hand in your own "till" is with them a serious matter; but putting it in the till of other people is not of the slightest consequence; and there are few of this *genus* who would not much rather promise to pay a librarian five or six guineas for a box, than actually pay a manager half that sum for one. With some of them the said amount—whole or half, no matter—is vital during the season, for all the necessary amusements of town; and at the end of the season they make a point of bolting out of it—with others, fashion, carelessness, habitude, convenience, all combine to make it more agreeable to put their hands in their pockets but once a year, and then they do not at all object to pay pretty good interest for so doing. There is a particular set, (pretty well known to the librarians by this time, or they ought to be,) who, not at all objecting to a *little* bit of fleecing, think it may be as well done occasionally with an opera-box as with a dice-box, there being plenty of "play" in both. To supply, therefore, the



wants and wishes, to consult the laziness and the lounging, and now and then the depravity of the *beau monde*, these gentlemen have become the principal managers of the principal London Theatres. Nor is it by the accommodation they render to the world of fashion alone that their state has become so important; it is by the assistance they have rendered, and at all times do render, the manager, as well as his patrons, that they have "grown so great." Their vast speculations in the Opera House are almost as well known as the Opera House itself, and they are, comparatively speaking, as extensive dealers in the property of minor establishments. The immense sums vested by them annually in her Majesty's Theatre have become so public, through the notoriety of Messrs. Chambers' affairs, that no indelicacy whatever could be charged against me were I to enter upon the subject, and to allege that the funds and securities of some two or three of the librarians herein cited have been the sole means of there being latterly an Italian Opera in London. Laying aside that view of the case, and not unnecessarily mixing myself up in other people's business, let me apply myself more immediately to mine own.

I have for several years past had dealings to a large amount with Messrs. Andrews, Sams, and Mitchell, and for the satisfactory result of those dealings I cannot do better than refer any sceptic to the parties themselves, by whose decision I shall be perfectly content to abide. They generally speculate on the character of the management, they did so upon mine, and I should wish no better bit of fun than to compare the extent of their dealings with my predecessors and successors (including "Shakspeare and Shakspeare's representative") and those they had with me. It would furnish another valuable leaf to the memorandum book of "my learned friend," Mr. Sergeant Talfourd. It is a source of unspeakable satisfaction to know that gentlemen who have placed confidence in your exertions for many years, by risking, during that period, thousands upon thousands of pounds, have never had that confidence abused, have not regretted its application, and not only have not lost by their enterprize, but "put money in their purse."

The reader will be inquiring probably what all this has to do with the 7th March, 1839: he shall know. Messrs. Andrews and Sams having been some time at variance upon points of business, upon which I have nothing and wish to have nothing to advance, perceived at last, like very prudent men, that their hostility was prejudicial to their respective interests, and extremely beneficial to the interests of other people. It was, therefore, suggested by many well wishers of both, that a reconciliation should be effected between them, which was accordingly done;

and, with the view of completing a matter so auspiciously begun, Mr. Sams invited the principal librarians, and the principal managers they dealt with, (Laporte and myself,) to a dinner on the day in question. I have long been intimate with both these gentlemen—with Mr. Andrews probably most so; and while in Mr. Sams I have invariably found good faith in dealing, and good fellowship out of it, I need scarcely add that the name of Mr. Andrews is a passport wherever liberality in business and all the distinguishing qualities of human nature are to be found. It was gratifying to me, therefore, to assist so agreeable a ceremony as the reunion of (what Mr. Lover has written so delightfully, and Michael Blood warbles so delightfully)—

“Hearts that had been long estranged,  
And friends that had grown cold!”

We sat down to the dinner-table, at one end of which was Mr. Sams, and at the other Mr. Andrews; and between them were to be found what the *Morning Post* calls “all the delicacies of the season;” and while it was pleasant to see the attention paid by each to those they were surrounded by, it was still pleasant to see the marked attentions they paid each other. *Mister Andrews* and *Mister Sams*, emphasised with an extra degree of “French polish,” resounded through the room with the demolition of every mouthful; but while all this denoted the display and the acceptance of hospitality, it seemed to me to be mixed up with a prodigious quantity of reserve, to which the following exquisite passage may be well applied:

*Bru.*—“How he received you, let me be resolved.  
*Luc.*—“With courtesy, and with respect enough;  
But not with such familiar instances  
As he hath used of old!  
*Bru.*           “Thou hast described  
A hot friend cooling: ever note, Lucilius,  
When love begins to sicken and decay,  
It useth an enforced ceremony!”

such seemed to me to be the case on the present occasion, and however one might regret any difference, or rejoice at any arrangement of it, one could not help an inward titter at the *modus operandi*. In one of those efforts of observation, when it was palpable that outward form and inward feeling were still a little at variance, the following view of the case was taken in shorthand by a party present on the occasion:

## RECONCILIATION DINNER

GIVEN BY MR. SAMS TO MR. ANDREWS, MARCH 7, 1839.

- MR. SAMS.—*Mister Andrews, I can strongly  
Recommend this carrot soup!*
- MR. ANDREWS.—“*Pins*” of late have gone so wrongly  
I fear appetite will droop,
- MR. ANDREWS.—But, *Mister Sams*, permit me—  
These *smelts*, sir, are not bad!
- MR. SAMS.—To a tittle you have hit me,  
If some turbot you will add.
- MR. SAMS.—*Mister Andrews*, try the mutton,  
Why, to kill it was a grief!
- MR. ANDREWS.—I *for once* would turn a glutton,  
Had it been a round of beef!
- MR. ANDREWS.—But *Mister Sams*, allow me,  
Do try this nice *ra-gout*!
- MR. SAMS.—(*Aside.*) The fellow thinks to cow me—  
Well I don’t care if I do!
- MR. SAMS.—*Mister Andrews*, now suppose we  
Mar no more each other’s wealth.
- MR. ANDREWS.—And *Mister Sams*, propose we  
Each other’s better health.
- MR. SAMS.—*Mister Andrews*, here’s to you, sir!  
(*Then aside.*) It has gone off pretty well.
- MR. ANDREWS.—*Mister Sams*, let none abuse, sir—  
(*Then aside.*) *Mister Sams* may go to h—ll.

The day following my benefit, and the little amusements herein detailed that were incidental to it, was marked by a fearful event in the dramatic world, although not immediately affecting the interests of the British stage, being the day on which one of the most accomplished singers that ever lived, Monsieur Nourrit, committed a frightful suicide, by throwing from a window of the hotel he was living in at Naples, dashing himself to pieces. The non-renewal of his engagement at the *Académie Royale*, Paris, produced in his mind a considerable degree of despondency, which was heightened into frenzy by the singular and sudden popularity of his successor, Monsieur Duprez; and their combined effects operating upon a mind of no very peculiar strength, drove it beyond the confines of reason. It has been said of a dancing-master that he has no occasion whatever for a head, unless it be to enable him to look like other people, and to have a peg to hang his hat upon. Pretty much the same may be said of the greater part of vocalists, modern or ancient;\* but Nourrit was a partial excep-

\* I had a principal male and female singer once playing in *Rob Roy*, under my management, who on the same evening thus acquitted themselves: the lady wishing to introduce *The Soldier Tired*, and being in

tion to so general a rule, and threw into the exquisite powers of his art the resources of a refined taste and a fervid imagination. I have not heard Monsieur Duprez, though I have heard great things of him; but in common with thousands of his idolaters I have listened with more delight, than I suspect I am likely to feel again, to the enchanting tones of *Adolphe Nourrit*. Monsieur Dupronchel, the present director of the *Academie*, whose brains would make but a very slight addition to the contents of the dancing-master's hat, was severely commented upon for allowing Nourrit to leave a theatre where he was so beloved, and with the business of which he was so mixed up; but if, as I have heard, the separation arose from the increased expectations of the warblers, a manager, however great a fool he may be in other respects, cannot well be considered one in this, where he protects the treasury and the reputation of the theatre at the same time. I say reputation, because there were plenty of people to be found in Paris who thought Nourrit's secession amply compensated for by Duprez's accession.

We have been enumerating (nothing like a we in all scriptory cases, as sounding more important, and though not in reality less egotistical than I, yet it seems so,) some curious circumstances that *have* occurred to managers of London Theatres, and I will now mention one that *did* occur, as curious as any that have been, or can be, recited. On reaching the theatre on Tuesday, March 12, 1839, I found on my desk a very small brown paper parcel addressed "To A. Bunn, Esq.," looking so dirty, and so suspicious, and weighing wherewithal sufficiently heavy as to increase such suspicion. The town had at that moment been partly astonished and partly amused by "Madame Vestris's infernal machine," and the narrow escape the party had who first opened it. Having no desire for any similar experiment, I hesitated in unfolding this mysterious packet, more particularly when my messenger described the dingy looking dog that left it at the stage-door, with an injunction that it was "to be delivered into Mr. Bunn's *own* hands." However, overcoming any gunpowder nervousity, and setting whatever of the combustible it might contain to the amount of a mere squib, I sent for my under-treasurer, and in his pre-

some doubt as to an appropriate place for its introduction, chose the scene of the interview and separation of *Diana Vernon* and *Francis Osbaldiston* in the first act, and as she left the stage, she simply said, "There he goes, putting me in mind of a *Soldier Tired*!"

The gentleman who represented *Francis*, has to say, "Rashleigh is my cousin; but, wherefore I cannot divine, he is my bitterest enemy." But he preferred his own punctuation, which ran thus:—Rashleigh is my cousin, but wherefore I cannot divine: he is my bitterest enemy."

gence opened some half dozen pieces of paper, each tightly bound by some half dozen pieces of string, and inside the last I found,

	£	s.	d.
32 Sovereigns . . . .	32	0	0
10 Half Sovereigns . . . .	5	0	0
13 Half Crowns . . . .	1	12	6
27 Shillings . . . .	1	7	0
1 Sixpence . . . .	0	0	6
	<hr/>		
	40	0	0
	<hr/>		

I began to think that this was the contribution of some eccentric supporter of Drury Lane, anxious to reward its manager's exertions, yet, with a rooted modesty, anxious to conceal his name: but such an occurrence was so totally without precedent, that I gave up that conjecture in utter hopelessness. Then I bethought me of more than one performer who had literally robbed me to such extent; and pondered over the probability of this being a return thereof, arising out of a touch of conscience; but as what little consciences most of them *have* got are very seldom touched, I abandoned that surmise with even a greater degree of despair than I first of all entertained it. Whom it was sent *by*, or who it was sent *for*, I am totally unable to tell: it was added to the general receipt of the exchequer for the benefit of all those having any claim on it, though the chances are, it was forwarded for my own individual advantage. The donor is hereby thanked, be he or she whoever he or she may be; and I can only say, if many more such had made their appearance, the disasters of Drury Lane Theatre would have been obviated or provided against. Then is not a manager's an odd life, and are not the people he has to deal with a very odd set of people? and if he should do odd things, can no excuse be found for him by your pickers and stealers, and evil speakers, and liars and slanderers? I can only say, if there is none, there should be.

The great patronage which had been extended to Mr. Van Amburgh personally, added to the reputation his performance had obtained, inspired that gentleman with a very grateful feeling towards his patrons, and with the natural wish of manifesting it. He consulted me upon the subject, and seemed to labour under one difficulty, and that was the mode. In selecting the obvious one, he was only fearful of appearing ostentatious, were he but wanted to appear thankful; and his scruples having been overcome, a DINNER was determined upon. What

a salve for every sore is that said commodity, a dinner; especially in a country where more are given, and more devoured at them, than in most parts of the habitable globe. Exclusive of all the considerations enumerated in the famous song upon the subject, there are few disagreeables in this life so rooted, that you may not "drown them in the bowl." I do not deliver this opinion from any particular propensity of mine own that way inclining, having neither the disposition, nor the constitution essential to the qualifications of a thorough imbibor; but from observation, which convinces me that few things can impede the progress of, or dispute the virtue to be found in, a set dinner. Animosities of the bitterest kind have been reconciled, affections cold and blighted have been rekindled, dealings doubted have had their doubts removed, estrangements have warmed into regards, the tide of the eye has ebb'd, the sigh of the heart has been allayed, and the sunniest smile has become brighter over the socialness of the festive board. There are those to be met with, who would even "consort with their eternal enemy" for the purpose of partaking of it. It is one of those vast contributions to individual comfort in which there is no hypocrisy; where, in the midst of self-indulgence, so little of selfishness is to be traced, one half of its pleasure being derived from seeing that your neighbour is faring as well as yourself. It is remarkable what effect the good things of this life have over the sternest souls, and how soon an introduction of them into the corporeal system oils and unfastens the rustiest recesses of the heart. But as we are preaching a doctrine none will be found to dispute, let us proceed from the theory to the practice.

Mr. Van Amburgh gave a splendid dinner on Wednesday, March 13, in the spacious saloon of Drury Lane Theatre, a day in Lent especially selected, because though Lord John Russell could make our doors fast, he had not the power to make us fast. His invitations were extended, with respectful application, to the many noblemen and gentlemen who had admired his performances, and to the whole *dramatis personæ* of Drury Lane Theatre who had assisted in them; and as, in addition to the recited advantages of a dinner, amusements of another kind came in with the dessert, it may easily be believed that the room was crowded to suffocation. Few persons having the power, object to pay for a good spread, but I should presume there is not a mortal on earth to be found, who would not partake of one if it be given to him. The amusements on the present occasion consisted of some of the finest music sung in the finest style that the ear of revelry need listen to, for it is marvellous how fertile is the fancy, how exuberant the taste, and

how incessant the desire to please, of a performer in the halls of festivity, when compared to his exertions on the public stage. Here comes out the practical part of my argument, for, while a performer often goes through the duties of his profession on their immediate scene of action, doggedly and without inclination, his better nature is sure to prevail with his transfer from the scenic to the festal board, where, though his hunger be easily appeased, his thirst for distinction beyond his brethren is only assuaged by using his utmost efforts to effect it.

Our party could lay claim to high rank and high talent amongst many of its number, and but one opinion prevailed, that Mr. Van Amburgh's manliness of character and undaunted nerve were accompanied with so much modest reserve, un-mixed with the slightest alloy of vanity, as to make it a matter of great regret that the dinner was not given to him instead of ~~by~~ him. It was certainly proposed by one, seconded by another, and maintained by all, that on the common score of reciprocity, the compliment should be returned; and in a still more substantial way than by dirtying a plate—viz. by the presentation of a piece; of clean plate but lover's vows and dicer's oaths are not less to be depended upon than are the good resolves entered into at a dinner-table. We demolished my friend's luxuries, and felt that we ought to give him an opportunity of demolishing ours. We considered his pre-eminent courage entitled to some solid acknowledgment of our estimation of that noble quality, and we promised to allot him the task of receiving, and ourselves the pleasure of giving it—but all that we felt and promised died away with the occasion that gave rise to such excitement. The recoil from entertainments of this description is as remarkable as the inkling to the enjoyment of them, in the first instance: hit the iron while it is hot, and you may fuse it into what shape you please, but suffer it once to cool, and there is an end of its pliancy. When a man is filling his mouth, he has not the slightest objection to your emptying his pocket; but only once suffer "digestion to wait on appetite," and his system undergoes a most extraordinary change. A man duly gorged is in a state of inaction, his soul has sunk into his stomach, and all his notions of the *ideal* are absorbed in his convictions of the *real*.

It had been slightly hinted to me at this time, that a good melo-drama might be put together from the admirable publication by Mr. Scrope, on *DEER-STALKING*—how the notion only crudely mentioned, and never seriously entertained, could have reached the ears of the author, I have no idea; that it did so, the courteous offer contained in the subjoined letter will testify:

"SIR,

"Having been informed that it is your intention to dramatize some part of my publication on *Deer-Stalking*. I beg to say that I will readily afford you any information or assistance you may require, should you persist in your design.

"I think some of the poaching incidents, such as the burning of the sheeting in the lake &c., the stalking the deer at bay in the cataract, the witch of Ben-y-gloe, contain in themselves materials for dramatic effect, if skilfully and scientifically treated. Your writer might begin with Lord Reay's breakfast at the poacher's.

"But *deer-stalking* is now so well understood by the higher orders of society, and indeed theoretically, if not practically, by all sportsmen, that some instructions from an experienced sportsman would be absolutely necessary for the complete success of your undertaking; and I these shall have great pleasure in supplying you with.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"13, Belgrave Square,

"WILLIAM SCROPE.

"March 15, 1839."

I was not dissuaded from the attempt by any nonsenical apprehensions of abuse for such production, having long since passed through ordeals of that nature—scathed or unscathed is not a matter of the slightest consequence. The popularity of Mr. Scrope's subject, and the able way in which he has treated it, were rather inducements to the undertaking; but the preparation would have occupied much time, and incurred great expense, without employing that portion of the company whose talents it was advisable to bring before the public, and on which our main reliance was placed.

I had been occupied for three months past on the composition of an opera, in conjunction with Mr. Balfe, a great portion of which was already in the hands of the copyist, as had been the *répertoire de la scène* in the various departments for some time past. As respects my own share in the transaction, it may perhaps behove me to say, that I never felt more sanguine upon the result of a composition, and was convinced that whatever favour had been extended to "*The Maid of Artois*" would, at least, be entertained for this. Making every allowance for the vast distinction between Madame Malibran and Madame Albertazzi, I yet felt as assured of my libretto as if it had run fifty nights. Of Mr. Balfe's music in it I fearlessly assert, that, whenever it may be heard it will be admitted to be his *chef d'œuvre*, and firmly fix his reputation amongst the best of our native composers.



With such means at my disposal as the great extent of the subject enabled me to resort to, I had every reason to calculate on more than ordinary success; and having entered into an engagement with Perrot and Carlotta Grisi, to give vitality to the incidental matter, there seemed to me a prospect, with the combination of so much material and novelty, of realizing what had now become unusual good fortune, and which the triumphs of *Gustave* and *The Jewess* had lulled us into the belief of being ordinary ones. In spite of all the losses and disasters to which this season had been subject, I was sanguine enough (mine ancient failing) to believe they might to a great extent be relieved by the result of the present undertaking. Having elsewhere been dilating on the vanity of authors, it would not be altogether unnatural for the reader to dilate upon mine; but should he feel disposed to do it never so much, I have unfortunately argument in store to silence him. We are all a vain set of varlets, beyond a doubt—vanity is the main ingredient of our nature—and in a theatre every author thinks he writes best, every actor that he acts best, and every manager that he manages best. When a man, however, has to combine in his own person any two of these qualifications, the contention between interest and *amour propre* is a very peculiar one; and standing therefore in the double capacity of author and manager I was compelled to draw a delicate line of distinction.

During the progress of this new speculation, Auber's opera of *Lelac des Fées*, which had been long in preparation at the *Academie Royale*, Paris, was announced for production, the night of which was eventually fixed for Easter Monday. In the middle of the preceding month, February, I had met at D'Almaine's table the Parisian proprietor, by purchase, of Auber's score, who had come over to possess D'Almaine's house of a similar advantage in this country; and though unable to name any day when its first representation might be safely looked forward to, we made arrangements for an early transmission of a copy of the music, with a view to its introduction at Drury Lane. Those who are acquainted with the slow coach progression of theatrical novelties during their stages of preparation, in the larger theatres of Paris, will admit that I could not suffer the resources of Drury Lane to be paralyzed, and all its operations to be dormant, while matters were only being agitated in Paris. Those who are not acquainted with their movements shall be told them.

From about a year to a year and a half, before one of their great works makes its appearance, the author and composer having made all the necessary arrangements with the manager, an initiatory rehearsal is called. Some of the principals, who

have nothing else to do that morning, attend; and after a few questions about the weather, the purchase of gloves, the cut of a coat, and some favoured *rendezvous*, the interview with each other ends in the grand consideration with all Frenchmen, *où dinez vous aujourd'hui!*—and just as they have settled that important point, and are about to leave the theatre, they casually inquire of each other, *Eh bien, comment vale nouvel opera?*

—FIRST REHEARSAL. On the second they all meet again, and after many similar discussions, they all turn into the *Café de l'Opera* for gossip—SECOND REHEARSAL. Subsequently the chiefs of departments assemble with the mechanical people, and after disposing of a cup of coffee or a basin of *bouillon*, owing to the intensity of the cold on so large a stage, they get rid of a THIRD REHEARSAL. After many such meetings with such results, matters are a little more seriously entered upon. One act begins to make its appearance, and, having drawn “its slow length along,” is relieved by the second. Then comes the introduction of the grand lever upon which all its movements turn—the pleasure of a prima donna, and the pleasure of her *amant*. She has certain stipulations to make, before she can consent to be ready by any particular time; and, while naturally fearful of offending against law, she sticks pretty close to custom. She can be ill whenever she pleases, and can get fifty doctors to give her fifty certificates that she is not expected to live the night out. The manager, therefore is entirely at her mercy; and by coquetting and coying with him, she may defeat all his arrangements; without possessing the shadow of right to mar a single one of them. If her dress does not please her, she will contrive to have half a dozen made until some particular one *does*: but if her perquisites are not enough, or if her engagement be near its termination, the Lord have mercy on the director! He may fix twenty different nights for the performance of his opera, but she will provide twenty different excuses for its delay; and as in some instances such delay may be ruinous, he finds it far better to yield to any stipulations than by procrastination to incur a greater loss than those stipulations would amount to. The case is simply defined. The *entrepreneur* fixes a given day for the production of a novelty, when the principal singer is taken suddenly ill, and sends a medical certificate of her indisposition. The manager is disposed to look upon this, what it really is, as a trick, but he has only his own conjectures to assist him; he considers very justly that her time with him being nearly expired, she is careless as to her remaining performances, and, with this impression, on his mind he confers with her lover. If he escapes having a sword run through him, he at least meets with a full justification of the lady's conduct, and plenty of abuse, for

expecting any one to sing in such a state of health; and as soon as wrath has given way to reason, a respectful and insinuating inquiry is made, whether any inducement can be held out to prevail upon her, the lady to **MAKE AN EFFORT**. Though plumply negatived at first, the matter is reconsidered; and while she is still too unwell to be spoken to on business, he will endeavour to persuade her; and after a visit or two more, an additional tender inquiry, a few hints, and eventual demands, the business is settled. I could name a French singer, whose article of engagement was on the eve of expiration, and obtained a renewal of it for three years, solely by this pretty process.

In the midst, therefore, of all these rehearsals, and the scenes they lead to, the public is regaled week after week, and day after day, with the promise of the new opera on a given night; and on that given night they are promised it another, without the show of apology, or the assignment of any cause: and between the real perplexities, the opposed difficulties, and the many absurdities incidental to the French stage, it is no uncommon thing for a grand opera to be twelve and fifteen months in preparation. But it matters little to its exchequer, where no rent is paid, where a large government allowance is accorded, and where the spirit of the people is purely dramatic.

With a knowledge of all these probabilities, I may almost say certainties, it was impossible for me to delay or to impede the preparations entered upon for the production of my own opera; and, leaving myself totally out of the question, it was neither delicate nor just to Mr. Balfe to do so. In the midst, therefore, of the utmost exertions for its speedy performance, we were astounded by receiving the unalterable determination and arrangement of the Paris director to bring forth *The Lac de Fées* on Easter Monday. Its success was such, that, with the usual want of faith in any thing national, I was beset by all, begging me to lay aside my own work, to make way for that of Monsieur Scribe. *Personally* speaking, there could not be a question as to the line of conduct I ought to pursue—*professionally* there were many. It is pretty clear that if I had attempted to stuff my own work down the throats of the people, in preference to one by so renowned an author, I should have received, whatever else I might have merited, unmeasured abuse, and, by giving way to him, I should probably receive but little credit.\* I had, however, to consult Balfe, to whose

\* My darling old friend Reynolds, to whom I had read my opera, and who was pleased to express himself in high terms of it, sent me these few lines on my withdrawing it, which made amends for all my disappointment:

"MY DEAR BONN,

"Wonders will never cease!! for at last I have discovered an au-

reputation and pocket the production of his opera was important; and finding that, with extreme good taste, he instantly gave preference to Monsieur Auber, I could do no less than follow his example by giving way to Monsieur Scribe. This sudden derangement of all my plans, owing to the outcry made by other people, and in violation of my own judgment, led to its being made known to the worthy public after the following fashion, enough in itself to satisfy the veriest theatrical cormorant that ever existed:

"In rehearsal, and will speedily be produced, with every possible advantage of scenery, machinery, dresses, and decorations,

"AUBER'S LAST GRAND OPERA OF

"THE FAIRY LAKE,

(*"Performed for the first time at the Académie Royale on Monday last."*)

"An arrangement having been made with Messrs. D'Almaine and Co., proprietors of the music, by which its exclusive performance is confined to this theatre, its adaptation has been undertaken by Mr. H. R. Bishop, and will be supported by

Madame Albertazzi,

M. M. W. Balfe, Mr. Giubilei,  
Mr. Allen, Mr. Stretton, Mr. S. Jones,  
and Miss Romer;

supported by the entire choral and orchestral strength of the establishment, and numerous auxiliaries. It will be followed by

A NEW BALLET,

*In which the most celebrated dancers of Europe,*

MONSIEUR PERROT AND MDLLE CARLOTTA GRISI,

will have the honour of making their first appearance upon the English stage."

There are but few of my readers, presuming them to be of a theatrical turn of mind, who have not heard Liston's delicious exclamation, "Between two stools you *may* happen to hurt the small of your back." And as there was never an instance in which that respectable adage was more completely verified, they shall be told how the fall hurt MINE!

thor without vanity; and his name is Alfred Bunn. Who else would have consented to the putting aside his own opera, and bringing out another, with all grand appurtenance, &c. &c.? Certainly *none* of the dramatic wittlings that used to meet in conclave against him.

"Ever, ever yours,

"F. R."

## CHAPTER XI.

Various opinions of various people—The invariable result of a London season—Madame Albertazzi's style of correspondence.—The exact nature of a commonwealth—The loss of one week multiplied by three—Singing small—Turning the tables on Mr. Balfe—Difference between singing *with* acting and *without* it—Glory—Strawberry Hill—Horace Walpole and other great men—Shakspeare's birth-day and his present position—A screw loose—Musical fools—Value of an oration—A man ignorant of his wife's situation—*Lapsus linguae*—An invitation accepted—Lucubrations of a literary friend—The last lay of the Minstrel—Its benefits, and its acknowledgment—Letter to the Guards—Landseer and the lions—Men making beasts of themselves—Garcia and De Beriot—A tiger—Royal marriage in *prospectu*—Penny postage—England going to the devil.

It is singular, (and it would be diverting to a manager if it were not done at his expense) to hear the various opinions which various people deliver on the probable chances of a London season, in either of the patent theatres. I have seldom met with a professional man, who in delivering his judgment on the subject, did not regulate it by passing events, without looking into their causes, or examining their consequences. If, at the moment of conversation, the theatre happened to be doing well, the concluding sentence of his remarks is, "Come, now you can afford to lose a little"—if things happen to be looking extremely black, the only consolation held out to you is, "Well, you must expect to lose just now." The universal impression in minds that *won't* reflect, and minds that *can't* reflect, is thus summed up. Every soul you meet after your season has begun badly, attempts to comfort you with this observation, "You must always expect to lose *before* Christmas:" when this period has passed by, and you have had a good four or five week's business, and with the return of the children to school the returns of the theatre drop off in proportion, you are retorted upon, "Oh! you must always expect to lose *after* Christmas"—then, as you progress through Lent, you are compelled to hear, "No money is ever made at this time of the year:" and finally, when Passion-week has flown over, you are regaled with the last bit of managerial alleviation that can be extended, "It has always been so; nothing is ever done *after* EASTER!" Thus, according to the general impression, the only glimpse of BLUE SKY in the atmosphere of nine months, is the single month of the Christmas holidays. One month's gain to eight months' loss is very easily summed up, but not easily disposed of.

In a general point of view, this calculation is a correct one,

and I have struggled hard in the hopes of falsifying it. I have always tried to make my grand effort at the beginning of the season, and in some cases have greatly succeeded—for if nothing be done by Christmas, one-third of the season has set in with a loss that the other two-thirds cannot possibly make up. But people, supposed to be most acquainted with the matter, and others quite ignorant of it, *will* discuss the subject, and will err in their discussions; and having been once asked by a distinguished nobleman, then attached to the court, "*who wrote Twelfth Night?*" I can account almost for any thing I hear and see.

Albertazzi, who had been engaged for two months from Easter, did not arrive to her time, and, when she *did* arrive, was not equal to her duty\*—more managerial delights—and when she *did* appear, all interest in her individual performance had died away. It will hardly be believed, that in such a building as Drury Lane Theatre, some of the finest of musical compositions, supported by the best talent the English stage could lay claim to, (including Madame Albertazzi,) and backed by a new and successful Easter piece and a popular ballet, such receipts as these could possibly have been the sole produce of each night's performance:

<i>Monday, April 8.</i> —Maid of Palaiseau and Devil on Two Sticks.—( <i>Madame Albertazzi's night of reappearance</i> ) -	£70 19 6
<i>Tuesday, April 9.</i> —Farinelli, the Brigand, and the Little Hunchback	42 13 0
<i>Wednesday, April 10.</i> —Don Juan and the King of the Mist	62 13 6
<i>Thursday, April 11.</i> —Maid of Palaiseau and Daughter of the Danube	61 8 6
<i>Friday April 12.</i> —La Sonnambula, Little Hunchback, and King of the Mist	51 5 0

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\* The following is a transcript of Madame Albertazzi's communication on the subject, not introduced to disparage her, for I always found her an obliging, pleasant creature: and without any desire to be a Monsieur Albertazzi, I join my own admiration with that of her thousands of admirers. The style of the latter is what tickled my fancy.

"April 4, 1839.

"DEAR BUNN,

"Is it not possible to defer my appearance until monday? I can assure you I am not in a fit state to sing. I should not be able to do myself justice. On monday I promise you to be in fine voice, and in good condition for all you may require! Grant me this favour, and I will sing any thing that in any time you may require *year after*?

"Believe me to be, dear Bunn,

"Your devo:

"EMMA ALBERTAZZI."

The expenses of the theatre all this time were not a farthing less than £200 a night, Albertazzi's night alone being £50 for every four night's performance. It will, therefore, be very easily credited, that in the fortnight bearing date from Easter Monday, the losses exceeded £1500. It was impossible, in the midst of all this disaster, to produce the only one thing that would relieve it—Auber's *Fairy Lake*—in less time than three weeks; and if the last two had incurred such a frightful damage as the one just recorded, the ensuing three must more than double it. A more desperate or dangerous position could not well be conceived, for to go on with the regular performances would be incurring responsibilities there were no funds to meet them with, and to form a republic was even incurring greater ones, just as difficult to combat. Some clever fellow (Tom Cooke, I think,) has wisely and wittily remarked, that commonwealth is *COMMON without the WEALTH*; and the truth of this observation cannot be too forcibly impressed upon the minds of all persons aiming at the establishment of one. Then to close the theatre was to put an extinguisher at once upon management, actor, author, composer, and every soul concerned. I took the advice of several distinguished theatrical men, and I acted upon their advice—mind me, I do not mean to say that I entirely agreed with them—I only mean to infer that I was solely and wholly, and most lustily abused for carrying into effect the thoughts of other people, by announcing a series of *Valentino concerts*, to give me time, without shutting up the theatre, to produce a novelty altogether worthy of it.

The first party who assailed me were the performers, to whose more immediate benefit the result was to be applied;—those who could not sing were apprehensive that the receipts would be swallowed up by those who could;—those who *could* sing, *wouldn't*; while the mere dependents were obliged to sing—small.\*

\* That all singers don't "sing small," may be gathered from a perusal of a note I received at this time, the receipt of which convulsed me with laughter. I never saw the gentleman, but I hear he has musical talents—his former letter I answered verbally through my musical director, but his present letter was so unanswerably cool, that a hearty roar was all it required.

"52, Poland Street, Oxford Street,

"London, April 4, 1839.

"SIR, I have written to you frequently for an engagement, and you have never given me an answer. Well, let that pass!

"I now write to you for an order to see '*Farinelli*,' for which I shall feel obliged; but if you will not give me that, I'm damned if I shall trouble you any more.

"I am, Sir,

"To Alfred Bunn, Esq.

"Theatre Royal Drury."

"Your obedient Servant,

"CLEMENT WHITE."

The head rebel on the occasion was the gentleman whose fortune I had been the means of making; who, without my assistance, would have been to this day, very likely, an unknown man; and who, therefore, on the mere score of reciprocity—gratitude too, if there *be* such a word—to say nothing of prudence, should have been the first to aid the theatre in its dilemma. But Monsieur Balfe, thought otherwise, or at all events acted otherwise, declined to cross the stage until some trifling arrears had been paid up,\* and then only consented to assist at these concerts on condition of a new and exclusive engagement being entered into. Mr. Balfe's example was followed by others; and as that would have been the case in whatever view he had taken of the matter, the view he *did* take was the more reprehensible.

Amongst the many horrors under which a London manager has to groan, pretty freely mentioned and commented upon herein, has yet to be included the character of operatic people, who, though bound to sing in the theatre at all times and on all occasions, have the effrontery to stipulate for other terms than their engagement warrants, if required to SING in a concert, though given under the same roof in which they are bound to PERFORM. Singers who may be in the receipt of two, three, four, or five pounds per night, by virtue of which they are compelled to act *and* sing for three or four hours, to the utmost extent their energies are capable of, will, if required to sing only a couple of songs in an orchestra, the singing of which will not occupy a quarter of an hour, and the exertion require no excitement, coolly demand ten guineas: they might with equal justice stop you on the highway, and take as much from your purse.

The receipts to the commencement of the *Valentino* concerts nearly trebled those which had been produced by a representation of the regular drama—but they grew “fine by degrees,” until the glory of them, if they ever had any, shared the fate of all other glory:

“Glory is like a circle in the waters,  
Which never ceaseth to enlarge itself,  
Till by broad spreading it disperse to naught!”

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\* Without wishing my friend Balfe otherwise than well, I could not help smiling when I heard of a similar infliction being visited on him a month or two afterwards, during his management of the English Opera House. On the night of his own benefit the curtain was unusually late in the ascent; and when Balfe came forward and told the audience that some malicious person had taken away the handle that wound up the said curtain, he might more truly have said, that the carpenters were making a handle of him, by refusing to take it up until their wages were paid them.



There is a satisfaction one's own mind enjoys, in the heaviest visitation that can be inflicted upon it, which is derived from the consciousness of having done the best that circumstances would admit of. In addition to this, is the gratification of finding that half the world agrees in making such allowance, even though the other half deny it altogether. I had plenty of friends to support my movements, though I had plenty of enemies to ridicule them: but the one main thing which always has been wanting, and always will be, was absent on the present occasion—the *animus* of the people; but as that has not been changed, and has been already commented upon, we had better leave it for pleasanter matter, if any is to be found. The humiliation entertained by the necessity of resorting to such an expedient to keep open the doors of a national theatre, was compensated for, the day after it took place, by a morning's revel in the wonders and delights of Strawberry Hill, to the enjoyment of which I was privileged by the kindest of owners, the Earl of Waldegrave. Oh, the exquisite taste, (finical, though it has sometimes been dubbed,) the minute research, the rich discrimination, the lavish expenditure, wherever art demanded it, the pure display, the profound examination, the laborious management manifest in this domain of Horace Walpole. Though some Goth has converted the celebrated Press-room (the Strawberry Hill Press, reader!) into a laundry, and the chapel in the garden has been suffered to go partially into decay, yet, with these exceptions, the place is precisely in the condition in which Walpole left it at his death in 1797. It is a sight which creates strange feelings, and strange thoughts, to witness the disposition of a place of so much celebrity, preserved in the very same order it was left in by its gifted owner, who quitted this world exactly one year after one happened to come into it, NOW FORTY-THREE YEARS AGO! and to think that he left that world the same year with Burke, Dudley, (Burke's respected publisher,) Addison's only surviving daughter, Mason, Mary Wollstencroft, Wilks, Mrs. Pope, Macklin, &c. &c., as if with the departure of so much greatness, there was nothing more worth living for,—impresses one with a notion that you make your appearance on earth just as all its noblest spirits were going away from it. Then the very room where the *Mysterious Mother* was composed, the author's own copy, printed on his own premises, now in that room, and the illustrations of it hanging on the walls, to which a reference is made in his own hand-writing;—oh, but these be true delights to gaze and to reflect on! And the famous painting that gave birth to the *Castle of Otranto*, and the study where that romance was

engendered! and the Gothic apartments, and the faces of those who owned their owner, hanging out from the walls in all the verisimilitude of genius, of rank, of power, of riches, and renown! Of a verity, the contemplation of all this is too absorbing, and too ennobling for the miserable manager of such a miserable place as a theatre, and the mention of it only pardonable, perhaps as involving an occasional reference to the works and the personages of the stage, which is his more immediate province.

On the 17th of the month now under discussion, (April,) I was favoured with the following invitation—a testimony that the honest admission of a man's inability to do justice to the works of the immortal bard did not deprive him of the disposition to pay becoming homage to his natal day, and that it was fully as acceptable as the quackery of those who professed to do what was not in their power:

“The Shakspeare Club present compliments to Mr. Bunn, and would feel happy if Mr. Bunn will favour the members of the club by dining with them at the Albion Tavern, on Tuesday evening next, at half-past seven o'clock, to commemorate the natal day of Shakspeare.

“Albion Hotel, Wednesday 17, April.”

The natural discussion of theatrical matters, on an anniversary such as this, furnished me with an opportunity of explaining the difficulties I had so often laboured under in repeated attempts to do any degree of justice, in the present state of the stage, to the matchless plays of the great bard: and moreover it enabled me to state a fact, which may be disputed by a set of monkeys, but cannot be controverted by men of sense, that Shakspeare's genius had never before been in such alarming jeopardy at the two national theatres as it was at the present moment, when it was hemmed in by *Valentino Concerts* at Drury Lane, and d——d bad acting at Covent Garden; and to such a position of affairs, it may be repeated again and again, has the assumption, the presumption and the cupidity of many, ay, most, of our principal performers, reduced the splendid temples in which the bard was wont to be so worshipped.

Though matters were now as bad at Drury Lane as they could possibly be, the parties at Covent Garden were by no means lying in clover. Ill blood\* had arisen amongst many of the

\* In evidence of this assertion may be mentioned in the fact of Mr. Haines, author of the libretto of Mr. Rooke's Opera of *Henrique*, having waited upon me and conveyed to me an offer of the services of Mr. Harrison, the newly-introduced tenor singer, and the use of the book and music on a reasonable understanding, *owing to the ill-treatment which he alleged all parties had received at the hands of the Covent Garden management!!!*

performers, and eventually between the lessee and the proprietors, with whom negotiations were now pending for the continuation, or rather for the fresh preparation, of a lease. But the stipulations of the said lessee were too preposterous, it should seem, to be listened to. Impressed with the belief that he had elevated the character of the theatre to an unusual degree of reputation and prosperity, and that he could much easier do without a theatre than they could without a manager, his expectations were commensurate with his vanity: while they, conceiving he had done more for himself than he had for them, preferred losing him altogether rather than conceding to him too much. The negotiation was therefore broken off, and an immediate announcement made of that heart-rending and distressing national event.

#### THE LAST NIGHTS OF THE PRESENT MANAGEMENT !

It was a wonder the whole country did not go into deep mourning; as it was, they went into fits, but they happened to be fits of laughter—and so the matter speedily died a natural death. The proprietors of the theatre, however, conceiving that some explanation of the business, if only of their own conduct in it, was due to the performers, summoned them together, and gave that explanation which only added to their previous dissatisfaction of that body. A curious circumstance came out at this meeting, not tending in the least degree to allay any excitement of feeling, from its development not being particularly complimentary to one important branch of the profession. Some communications that had passed between the lessee and the proprietors were read at this meeting; and as it forms no part of my business to question the delicacy of such a proceeding. I shall deal merely with the fact, and that is the postscript of one of the letters, descriptive of the difficulties of management, contained this fatal truth,—“I can make nothing of your **MUSICAL FOOLS.**”

As the affairs of one house were no secret, I was strongly advised not to let those of the other remain one; and by calling *my* company together, frankly impart it to them. I might, in justification of all measures that had been taken, allege the fact of my having come into re-possession of the theatre the beginning of August, by which time the principal performers were engaged elsewhere, the plans of my antagonist *were* nearly completed, and mine *ought* to have been. I might truly have said that, by such engagements, the production of the more expensive commodities of opera, ballet, and spectacle were forced upon me,—that all previously engaged in the establishment had received full pay for more than one hundred and thirty nights, and

that when proprietors and performers used more regularly to be paid in full, it was before the King had granted licenses for new theatres, and extended the term of those already in existence, and before the Lord Chamberlain had set at nought the King's patents granted to Drury Lane and Covent Garden theatres, by rescinding the most valuable part of their privileges. Supposing, as I could truly and conscientiously have done, that I had advanced all this argument, what possible end could it have answered? Performers are the least reflective of created beings; and all the protestations they might have made in reply to my statements, the breath of the first person they happened to meet after leaving the scene of my oration, would have turned the whole current of their dispositions. No; the best thing to do was to act, not preach; and as any prolongation of the concert exhibiting could only increase the impending ruin, it was far better to stop them—and I did so. I made a conditional arrangement with the parties involved in the performance of the *Fairy Lake*, upon the production of which we instantly set to work. The pledge which had been given to the public in respect to that opera was on the point of being redeemed, when intimation reached me of Madame Albertazzi having apprized her husband of her intended departure for Paris on a given day, she being *enceinte*. This was a settler for us all. The opera could not have been played a night or two before the principal performer in it was bent upon bolting; and then, had she remained longer, the part of a *fairy* must have been played by that principal performer, she being “in the way that ladies wish to be who love their lords;” or (as my Lady Byron adds) “who love the lords of others.” I sent in a devil of a fury for the husband, and accused him of having wantonly and shamefully deceived me, and of being the cause of my deceiving the public; but if it had been the death of me, I must have burst into a fit of laughter, when the poor fellow assured me, on his honour, that *he had not the remotest idea that his wife was in that situation!* Thus terminated my managerial career at Drury Lane theatre, victimized from the first, and unto the last, by the caprices, the impertinences, the avarice, the conceit, and the injustice of most with whom I had any dealings, and wantonly assailed by many a dog with a slanderous tongue in his mouth.\* While these opera-

\* “By way of returning from grave to gay, I may mention a humorous application of the best part of this expression. Poor Wynne, a fiddler once in my company, on whose eccentricities Mathews based many of his most amusing studies of character, having gone to market to lay in provision for the week, purchased amongst other articles, a *bullock's tongue*, and brought it home dangling on the edge of his basket to astonish and delight the partner of his table. But the tongue had met in the way, it would seem, with a *lapsus linguæ*, for it was nowhere to be

tions connected with the performers and the public were progressing, or being retarded, I had to enter upon those connected with the internal arrangements of the establishment, quite as vital as the rest? With every desire to conduct Drury Lane theatre as it had been customary to conduct it, (for it was stipulated in my lease that I *should* thus conduct it,) it was impossible so to do,—and the sub-committee who regulate the affairs of that concern viewed with as much indulgence as they could command, but with more concern than they liked to express, the disastrous state of affairs. Unfortunately for the welfare of this theatre—not in the particular instance in question, but generally speaking—this *sub-committee* has over it the occasional intervention of a *general* committee, which, assembling only on great emergencies, has the power of deranging the plans of the smaller body, which have been matured by attendances and meetings throughout the season. An assembly of this description was held on Saturday, April 20, at which it was resolved that the theatre should be thrown again into the market at the end of the season, but announced for letting at once; and that I should be *invited* to do *this* year what I *volunteered* to do *last*—surrender my lease. I cheerfully assented to that part of their resolutions dependent upon *my* own pleasure, but strongly objected to that part of them dependent upon *theirs*; and when, pursuant upon my willingness to meet their views, their solicitor brought me the necessary document for signature, I thought it but just to all parties concerned, to address this remonstrance to their body:

“ Theatre Royal Drury Lane,  
“ April 26, 1839.

“ GENTLEMEN,

“ Mr. Burgess having submitted to me, for signature, the

found. Off the poor scraper started, and, being nearly blind, ran against every person and thing he met. His first sally was against a huge cart-horse, the stump of whose docked tail nearly blinded what little sight Wynne had left; he stood bowing and apologizing, and obtaining no answer, he consoled himself by moving and exclaiming, *sotto voce*, ‘No gentleman, that’s pretty clear, or you would have said something.’ Rushing on then into the market, he learned from a little boy, that he had seen a dog run away with the unfortunate tongue. The poor man became half frantic, and in the wildness of his wanderings, nearly upset every person whom he chanced to encounter, till coming in full contact with a colossal gamekeeper, poor Wynne spun back a yard or two, and under the rebound from his body, he recovered himself by respectfully saying, ‘I beg you ten thousand pardons, I am sure, sir,—but do you happen to have seen a dog with a tongue in his mouth?’ The unfeeling fellow, not knowing the cause of the inquiry, and supposing it to originate in some latent object, coolly answered, ‘You d—d old fool, did you ever see a dog without a tongue in his mouth!’”

document by which it is proposed that I surrender the lease of the theatre; and perceiving in it a clause giving you immediate power to advertise the property, I inquired of that gentleman if it were probable you would act at once upon that power, and he has stated his belief you would.

"Before, therefore, I sign it, I beg to ask whether, (without any inquiry as to how such a step may affect my future situation—in the midst of my preparation for the production of an expensive work, which thereby may be rendered useless in the vortex of struggles brought about in an attempt to keep open your theatre) it is your intention to make a hasty announcement, which will paralyze all my exertions, and put any advantages to yourselves and others, arising therefrom, totally out of the question, but which might be calculated upon, by a slight and reasonable delay.

"I am, gentlemen,

"Your obedient, humble servant,

"A. BUNN."

"To the Sub-committee, &c. &c."

They adopted my view of the case, by sanctioning a short delay in the meditated announcement, and I occupied as much of the intervening time as I could abstract from the duties of management and authorship, (having, on the completion of my opera with Balfe, and on its withdrawal to give place to *Le Lac des Fées*, undertaken the translation and adaptation of that work,) to a consideration of my future plans. Having taken as clear a survey as I was capable of taking, not only of my own situation, but of the general situation of the profession itself, I submitted my observations to the consideration of an officer of my cabinet, a dear and undeviating friend, to the coolness of whose deliberation, and to the acuteness of whose judgment, experience had told me I could always confidently apply. Mr. Reynolds' answer, if I take not, will amuse and instruct others, as it amused and instructed me; and, proceeding from such an excellent theatrical authority it claims an especial corner among the many valuable documents with which, I trust, my pages are stored:

"May 5, 1839.

"MY DEAR BUNN,

"Yes,—like you, I literally cannot solve the enigma—for 'true it is, 'tis pity; and pity it is 'tis true,' that the same actors and actresses, who some twelve or fourteen years ago were moderately applauded, are now received amidst waving of hats and handkerchiefs, by the house rising *en masse*. Nor is that all—

for on the fall of the curtain, my Lord John Bull, my Lady John and common John, all rise again, and the said actors and actresses return to the charge, amidst a volley of huzzas, laurels, and bouquets!

“ ‘Now, there is surely more in this, than is dreamt of in our philosophy, Horatio!’—for here are the identical ladies and gentlemen with the same voices, the same action, the same faces, the same comic trip, the same tragic strut, in short the same every thing, except the same salaries! which naturally *rise* with the audience—and if you ask me who is answerable for all this unaccountable whirligig proceedings, I reply—‘decidedly not the performers’—no; and, fully aware of the *certain uncertainty* of their profession, I hail their success! and sincerely hope they’ll continue to make the most of this new *rising generation*, who know *no* more of acting than those in the two grand palace-yard theatres know of —. However, as I do not exactly understand what is or what is not a breach of privilege, I believe I had better not risk playing with edge-tools, but confine myself to the case more particularly before the court, namely, *that* of stars, star-gazers, and ‘*star-chambers*.’ (You remember it being said, that when a late manager was in the *King’s Bench*, he *thus* dated his letter.)

“I am old enough (unluckily) to recollect when Lord Camden, Burke, Dr. Johnson, Fox, Sheridan, Wyndham, Erskine, and Sir Joseph Reynolds, were frequently seen among the audience, and (at different periods) when Garrick, Barry, Henderson, Lewis, Mrs. Abington, Mrs. Jordan, John Kemble, and Mrs. Siddons, were seen amongst the performers!

“When manly sense; when nature mix’d with art—  
When thorough knowledge of the human heart—  
When pow’rs of acting, vast and unconfin’d,  
And fewest faults with greatest beauties joined—  
When strong expression and strange charms that lie  
Within the magic circle of the eye.

Oh! such was the histrionic talent of those days! but alas! could any one of them be ‘called from the peaceful grave’—ay, if even Garrick himself were now to appear before one of modern non-descript audiences, what would be the result?—why, his school having been *totally* different from the present approved and established style, he would probably be deemed old-fashioned and absolete! yes, and on a similar principle to that of the Spartan auditory, who violently applauded the *squaking* of a *sham* pig, and as violently hissed the same facetious expression from a *real* pig; so Roscius himself might be glad to escape from the honour of being greeted with more compact

and marking offerings than those to harmless bouquets and laurel wreaths.

"Of course this opinion being in direct opposition to *that* of our present unfledged race of playgoers, they will retort, and contemptuously exclaim, 'Who made you a judge, old Square-toes;' or, 'Who asked your opinion, old twaddling Don Snapshorte de Teste?' Well! granted I *am* a twaddler; but are there not young twaddlers as well as old ones? at least I hope there are, if solely that they may still go on—not only biting at modern acting, but also at modern dinners, (mind, though, I don't mean those which performers *give*, but those which are *given* to performers,) where the *semper instabile vulgus* actually 'makes the meat it feeds on;' for owing to the well got-up reiterated shouts for 'one cheer more!' and the usual prepared laudatory speeches from good-natured peers and M. P.'s, and the usual applicable toasts and songs—oh! it's rare fun altogether! and but for bothering old age and gout, be assured, my good fellow, I would not mis one of these ecstatic exhibitions, and after all, would heartily join in proving that John Bull *collectively* was never right but once in his life; and that was (as I have elsewhere said) when he d—d a comedy of mine; yet *individually* he is such a thorough good fellow, that I should be the very worst of 'old squaretoes,' if I endeavoured to lessen his joy, or deaden his admiration!

"But, notwithstanding all this, I admit there is no fun in a lessee's case—at least not in yours—for to manage sub-committees, general committees, lawyers, &c., as well as performers, authors, editors, &c., seems to me impossible; and *ergo* (under existing or rather *expiring* circumstances,) why not turn your mind to Covent Garden? where, having punctually paid rent for the whole of your term, (about £17,000) the proprietors must listen to your proposals—and then wishing success to Drury, and hoping it may find another tenant that will keep it open for another five years, (though *entre nous* where is he to be found?) why 'cross the cutter,' and cry 'hurrah for old Covent Garden and the house of Harris!'

"Believe me, dear Bunn, always yours,

"FREDK. REYNOLDS."

The two patent theatres may now be said to have been tenantless, for those in occupation were bringing their respective seasons to a close, and both their domains were publicly announced to be in want of a lessee for the future. If my finances had been in a flourishing condition, I should have paused before I took up my friend Reynolds' hint, by entering seriously into a new speculation with an uncertain property and arbitrary landlords;



but as they were in a state of derangement, any contemplation of it was totally out of the question,—the last act of my management, that afforded me more true delight, though exercised on a very melancholy occasion, than most occurrences that took place during my long connexion with the theatres royal. I look back upon it with pride; but if it should be the reader's opinion that there is nothing particularly to be proud of in performing a single act of duty, I will make him a present of that term, and select another—delight. One of the most distinguished of modern poets, Mr. Haynes Bayley, departed from a scene of sorrow and illness, without being enabled to make a sufficient provision for the survivors of his misfortunes. His last and most admired compositions will be found exquisitely portrayed in that undying verse by Montgomery (JAMES, for fear of mistakes:)

“The bard, to dark despair consigned,  
With his expiring art  
Sings, 'mid the tempest of his mind,  
The shipwreck of his heart!”

Some admirers and friends of the deceased minstrel being anxious to make up, as far as possible the deficiency in his widow's resources that had become manifest, applied to me with a view of taking a benefit in Drury Lane Theatre, where, by public sympathy and private contribution, so laudable and so desirable an object might be attained. It would be an absurd display of vanity to talk of the readiness with which their praiseworthy plans were entered into; it will be much better to place amongst my other *memoranda* their own announcement, which winds up a continuous chain of interesting events in the order in which they occurred:

“THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE,

“The late THOMAS HAYNES BAYLEY, Esq.

“The nobility and gentry are respectfully informed, that it is proposed to give, *under high and distinguished patronage,*

A GRAND DRAMATIC AND MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

AT THIS THEATRE,

“On Friday, June 7, 1839,

“FOR THE BENEFIT OF

“THE WIDOW AND CHILDREN OF THE ABOVE-NAMED POET AND  
DRAMATIC AUTHOR,

whose long illness, terminating in his lamented death, has thrown his pecuniary affairs into a state of embarrassment, from which it is the object and hope of the promoters of the present undertaking to relieve them. The most handsome offers of professional support and assistance are already coming rapidly in, and the general esteem in which Mr. Haynes Bay-

ey's poetical works were held, together with the great popularity of his dramatic writings, afford the strongest grounds for believing that this appeal to the best sympathies of the public will be one of the most successful that has been made for many years.

"THE ENTERTAINMENTS WILL CONSIST OF  
"TWO OF MR. BAYLEY'S DRAMAS,

"one to be performed by the  
"HAYMARKET COMPANY, AND ONE BY THE  
OLYMPIC COMPANY.

"AND BETWEEN THE DRAMAS  
A CONCERT

will be given, in which some of *the first talent in the country*, vocal and instrumental, English and foreign, will assist. A host of professors have kindly volunteered to form a committee for the management of the concert, and all requisite attention will be given to the dramatic portion by the members of the *Dramatic Author's Society*.

"MR. BUNN

has most handsomely given the gratuitous use of Drury Lane Theatre, and *Madame Vestris* and *Mr. Webster* have, with the like liberality, offered every facility with reference to the assistance of

"THE OLYMPIC AND HAYMARKET COMPANIES.

"Any communication tending to forward the object in view will be thankfully received, addressed to Mr. R. B. Peake, at the stage door of the theatre."

The benefit took place on the day announced, viz. June 7th, and the amount it was the cause of realizing has been so far the means of increasing the slender store that remained to his family, as to place them above the humiliation of any farther public appeal. I had the pleasure of Mr. Bayley's acquaintance, and was, with the rest of my fellow-creatures who have eyes and ears, an enthusiastic admirer of his delightful writings. The pleasure they have often afforded me, was feebly but full-heartedly returned on the occasion, by the assistance I was enabled to lend; and if my purse had been as loaded as my feelings, I would more substantially have marked my admiration. It is a mournful consolation to subjoin this acknowledgment, on the part of the committee appointed to regulate the arrangements of the evening.

"BENEFIT FOR THE WIDOW AND CHILDREN  
"OF THE LATE

"*Mr. Thomas Haynes Bayley*.

"June 8, 1839.

' SIR, I am directed by the committee to return you their most

heartfelt thanks, for the very kind assistance afforded to them on the above occasion.

“ And have the honour to be, Sir,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ To Alfred Bunn, Esq.”

“ R. B. PEAKE.”

And with a record of this sad memento, I wish repose to the ashes of a gifted son of song, of whom his bereaved partner may well exclaim, “ *Je regrette ta mort et ma vie.*”

It would be difficult to find a corner for the various trifling occurrences which took place during this season, some of no moment, others of very little; still, as being mostly mixed up with theatrical life, a general record was kept of them. An officer of the Guards with whom I have long been intimate, being on the point of embarking for Canada (after it was uncertain whether Mr. Mackenzie had made away with it or not,) and having had all his life the visitation of a theatrical mania upon him, extracted from me a promise to give him from time to time, as my leisure would admit, a full, true, and particular account of what was going on amongst that select part of the community to be found in theatres. I fulfilled that promise, and finding a copy of the epistle despatched to him, I have ventured, at all risks of a charge of absurdity, to give it a corner here:

MY JOHN,

As something has, I trust, conveyed to you

By this time to that precious climate,

I keep the promise which I made you

Of sending word of all that I'm at!

*Imprimis*, your old friend, the marquis,\*

Is sticking like a leach unto us,

And if one might a statesman quiz,

He's trying all he can to “do” us!

Then, although London's full of lions,

Yet none of them one-half the rage are

(Especially amongst your high 'uns)

As those which in Van Amburgh's cage are.

Your royal mistress, Heaven bless her!

Considers all these tricks so slightly,

And hoping they'll at last caress her,

Doth pay a visit to them nightly.

And Landseer hath a *billet* written,

Of finest scent and finest breeding,

To say he's with their charm so smitten,

He'd give the world to see 'em feeding.

Between ourselves, if I mistake not,

His easel's booked Van Amburgh's phiz for;

And if your sense your soul forsake not,

You'll guess *the party* whom it is for!!

---

\* Conyngham.

WE had a feed too, vastly pleasant,  
 So crammed one scarcely could get in there.  
 And as some "pals" of yours were present  
 I only wish that you had been there.  
 Poor Malibran! whose name in dying  
 Though dead herself, so have we missed her,  
 I've been with Sieur de Beriot trying  
 "Tarnation" hard to get her sister.  
 He says she for the stage not ripe is.\*  
 But as I know these nice rascallions  
 And also what a precious prize his,  
 You'll find she'll go to the Italians!  
 We've brought an opera out by Barnett,  
 With Romer's most enchanting singing—  
 Of merit, but they won't disarn it,  
 For not a shilling is it bringing!  
 Then you who love all matters manly,  
 Must know were willing for a tiger  
 As black as h—ll—which Captain Stanley  
 Has brought home from the banks of Niger;†

---

\* The following is Monsieur de Beriot's reply, which bore out my suspicion; for though he states that Mademoiselle Pauline was "trop jeune" to come out last year, she appeared a month or two afterwards at the opera! The first part of the letter refers to his promised bust of Malibran:

"Paris, Hôtel de Paris, rue de Richelieu,  
 "MON CHER MONSIEUR, "Le 22 Janvier, 1839.

"Excusez le retard de ma réponse; une absence que je viens de faire est la cause.

"Je vous ai en effet promis un buste, et je tiens à remplir ma promesse; mais il me faudra probablement en mois, pour vous le faire parvenu, car je craindrais en vous expédier une copie trop fraîche qu'elle ma'rrivat à Londres tout endommagée.

"J'ai communiqué votre proposition à Madame Garcia, mais je regrette de n'avoir pas une réponse affirmative à vous donner. Elle pense avec raison que sa fille est trop jeune encore pour prendre un engagement avant l'année prochaine—d'ici là-vous aurez le temps de vous voir et de vous entendre.

"Recevez, cher Monsieur, mille complimens empressés,  
 "C. DE BERIOT."

† An animal of a very rare species which Mr. Van Amburgh was most anxious to possess; and with the view of purchasing it, an application was made to the Earl of Derby, whose property it was supposed to be. His lordship's reply settled the question.

"Knowsley, March 12, 1839.

"SIR,

"In reply to the letter I have this day received from you, I have to inform you, that I have nothing to do with the animals you speak of. They were brought over to this country by a relation of mine, who kindly offered them to me, but they would not at all answer my wishes; and in consequence of my declining this kindness, he has I am told, consented to their being disposed of, and I believe they have been purchased by

Poor Harris sadly circumvented,  
 Strong-minded, and, what's more, good-hearted,  
 Beloved as he will be lamented.  
 This "vale of tears" has just departed !\*  
 Then such a "Derby"—only fancy  
 That on this day we all so dote on,  
 You could not o'er the course a man see  
 Who had not got a thick greatcoat on.  
 Then—jockeys in a snow storm riding,  
 And horses on the greensward skating  
 And all in booths or stables hiding,  
 Wherever they could stuff their pate in.  
 While those who brought champagne for icing,  
 Found plenty there, already made too;  
 But brandy being more enticing,  
 They longed for what they so well paid too;  
 And then the darling women, bless 'em !  
 In silks and muslins were so quiv'ring,  
 We were compelled to closer press 'em,  
 In order to prevent their shivering !  
 I thought of you, where now you're tied up—  
 —That land of which such things are written—  
 Where half the year by heat you're dried up,  
 And t'other half by frost are bitten !  
 Then one at court who rather high is—  
 And whose reports do not miscarry,  
 Tells me the universal cry is,  
 Her Majesty intends to marry !  
 And as few ladies living, therefore,  
 Who, if they had their own way, wouldn't ;  
 I cannot see good reason wherefore  
 A lady who *can* have it, shouldn't !

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Mr. C. Wombwell. Captain Stanley is now with his vessel, the Wolf, at Plymouth.

"I remain, Sir,

"Your humble servant,

"DERBY."

\* I was seldom more shocked, and never more surprised, than on the receipt of this afflicting letter :

"MY DEAR BUNN,

"As I know, that notwithstanding all your present troubles and difficulties, you are anxious about poor Harry Harris, I am sorry to say, my fears were too true: he left this transitory world yesterday at half-past one o'clock, and died so easily, that, all round his bedside thought he was asleep. Thus, perhaps, I have lost the nearest and dearest friend that ever man was blessed with. You, who know for so many years he formed a part of my fireside, and that during the whole period he never uttered an unkind word, must, I am confident, sympathize in my loss—personally also you must feel it, for you were always on very good terms with him, and, like myself, will acknowledge, 'We shall not look upon his like again.'

"God bless you, and believe me,

"Ever, ever yours,

"Monday May 13, 1839."

"F."

Then—as we found the stage decaying,  
 We gave them concerts A LA MUSARD :  
 And had you heard some varlets playing,  
 You would have ventured to abuse hard !  
 Of Parliament I know but little,  
 Which little's in a " blest condition ;"  
 Its work, which suits it to a tittle,  
 Lies in a " Penny Post petition ;"  
 But when the state's estate is *minus*,  
 'Tis not the aptest time to dock it,  
 So, for some other tax they'll fine us,  
 And put the change in Rowland's pocket, \*  
 Thus while you, reckless what befell you,  
 In foreign fun and frolic revel—  
 Permit me, Johnny, just to tell you,  
 That England's going to the devil :  
 At least some learned men, who quiz not,  
 Assert most roundly that it true is,  
 And all I promise you, if 'tis not,  
 At all events I know one who is !  
 And that yours,  
 While this machine is to him,  
 A. BUNN.

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## CHAPTER XII.

The Steward's reckoning—Contrast between a paid and a paying manager—The three *h's*—Drury Lane committee—Recapitulation of difficulties—Parliamentary definition of the legitimate drama—Shakspeare and other authors—Six years' good work, and five hundred and sixty-eight good performances—The Road to Ruin—A perfect company detailed, both foreign and native—Eighty new pieces and five damnations to boot—Music *versus* language—A manager's authorship—Virtues of comparison—How to "cast" plays, without talking about it—The advancement of the drama—Vestris and Macready, and Augustus Cæsar—A practical display of the result of metropolitan management.

A STEWARD intrusted with the management of weighty and extensive affairs should, at the end of his term, if he be an honest one, give some account of his stewardship. I had long resolved upon this; but to do it correctly was a work of time, and to do it incorrectly was worse than not doing it at all. Without a particle of knowledge to assist them in framing their animadversions, a set of scribes have amused themselves with abusing me, with no other reason than what malice could furnish them for a long waste of time—betraying in their lucubrations ignorance alike of *their* profession and of *mine*. There is not one among them who, had he been placed in the same situation, and always under the same trying circumstances as I have been, would not have betrayed at least as much stupidity; but if it be

\* Mr. Rowland Hill, the well-paid proprietor of this precious plan.

not easier, at all events, it is pleasanter, to point out the beam in your neighbour's eye, than to acknowledge you have a mote in your own. The fact is, that many people of discretion, and fools invariably, are led away by the latest impression on their minds; without examining into causes, they pounce at once upon effects, and come to the conclusion that because the exertions of a person may for the moment be paralyzed, that he has NEVER made *any* exertions.

Without taking into consideration the efforts which had been made through so long a connexion with the London stage as mine, it would have appeared, from the merciless attacks of the parties who assailed my final retirement from it, to a stranger, that some ignorant experimentalist, some novice in a profession requiring the utmost experience, some theorist who had never before crossed a stage, had attempted to dive into its profound arcana, without being able to solve any portions of its mysteries or its secrets. I am as willing as any other person to be "written down an ass" by wiser men than myself, of which thousands upon thousands are to be found; but I cannot consent to be so classified by those who are more *assified* than I am, and who indulge in their spleen at the expense of even what little intellect they possess. To vindicate myself from false charges entertained by feelings of malice, and not by the scrutiny of judgment, has been the principal aim of these pages; but that would, of itself, be but an egotistical and uninteresting piece of business. I have called to my aid a collection of valuable theatrical documents, useful to all who care for the welfare of our drama, and those who seek to cultivate it; and which, but for such circumstance, would most likely never have seen the light. But there is a much greater task to accomplish, before I can satisfy myself, and even when I have arrived at that self-important position, it remains to be proved whether I shall satisfy my reader. With the same good feeling (always supposing such to be the case) in which he has thus far gone on with me, I must hope he will go back with me, to enable me to complete my argument.

The mere question of SELF is very easily disposed of, if it depended merely *upon* self; for my ambition would have been just as well satisfied, and my pocket much *more* satisfied, had I remained, as I intend *pro futuro* to remain, a PAID and not a PAYING manager. I should then have avoided all the cares, all the obloquies, all the indignities, all the privations, all the misrepresentations, and all the mortifications, which wait upon power, be it wielded ever so considerately. I should have avoided the inevitable and ultimate consequence to any manager of the patent theatres,—who has neither ingots nor acres to melt,—of being dragged however full of honesty and good in-

tention, before a legal tribunal for public examination, where, however flattering and triumphant may be the scrutiny into character, the feelings of humiliation and degradation, temporary though they be, are barely durable, and only become so by the consciousness of rectitude, and a determination of purpose to appear what you *are* so. Being one of moderate desires, I should have amassed by this time as much as would have gone a considerable way towards the comforts of advancing years, which so many by *my* exertions have, during the period of their being made, actually done—and thus have had, what every man is entitled to, the emoluments arising from his own labour. The duties of management came upon me by desire, by advantage, by study, by travel, by fate if you will—but the responsibilities of it by *CIRCUMSTANCE*. To fulfil the promise made to my predecessor, and to maintain the position in which I then stood before the public, *was THAT CIRCUMSTANCE*: and when its responsibilities were once upon my shoulders, I had to make every exertion which industry, ingenuity, or expediency, could devise, when I had no other backers but them to assist me. When once involved in an enterprize of this nature, there is a prospect, always believed to be in your reach, which induces you to persevere; and the excitements of a theatrical life, while they are the most delusive, are at the same time the most alluring imaginable. Had I possessed those beneficial means that should be at the disposal of a manager of such enormous buildings, that prospect might yet have been realized; but the first grand consideration, without which all others are unavailing, was wanting—*CAPITAL!* *my* “capital” was in my head, my heels, and my hands,\* instead of being in my pocket. When that overwhelming difficulty has been occasionally got over, I have found myself repeatedly discussing the terms of my future tenancy of the theatre, at a period of the year when all my plans ought to have been matured. The arrangements of an ensuing season should be nearly all complete before the preceding one has expired, trusting for their total completion to the casualties which every season naturally brings along with it: but when a man does not definitively know, until August, that he has to open a national theatre in September, he may be looked upon as a lucky fellow if he can open it at all.

\* These three *h's* remind me of three others, by which the three popular comedians of their day, Elliston, C. Kemble, and Richard Jones, used to be distinguished. They were called the three H's, because Elliston's comedy was to be found in his *heart*, Charles Kemble's in his *head*, and Jones's in his *heels*; and whoever has examined the joyousness of the one, the studied and artificial manner of the other, and the invariably bustling *entrée* of the latter, will admit the truth of their nomenclature.



It must not be set down that I seek to impute to my landlords, the committee of Drury Lane Theatre, the blame that, under other circumstances, would naturally attach to persons apparently so subject to the charge of procrastination; for I have already explained the situation in which they are placed, and must continue to be placed, by their constituency, until relieved by the repeal of a most absurd Act of Parliament. They are men of too much practical sense, and too alive to the interests of the great charge committed to their care, to receive or to continue in their confidence, any person who experience had not told them was to be depended upon. That experience had convinced them, as I feel assured it *will* convince, if it has not done so already, others they have to deal with, of the utter hopelessness of obtaining a tenant practical and responsible at the same time; and where they have been unable to obtain the latter, they have invariably endeavoured to make the best bargain they could with the former. Those blatant boobies, who assail without reason, and always in ignorance, have visited this committee with a degree of abuse correspondent with that which they have lavished upon me, presuming that the *ipse dixit* of an uninformed person, merely because it appears in a newspaper, is to be preferred to the knowledge, gained by practice, of men of information, ability, and station.

To the other difficulties just cited, must never be lost sight of the recklessness of a liberal Lord Chamberlain having thrown open so many more places of public entertainment than ever before had been in existence; and that when, by his so doing, the principal performers were lured away to those theatres, the patent houses had to resort to every species of mixed entertainment, the said Lord Chamberlain questioned the privilege of those patents by which such entertainments had, for years previously, been given and altogether forbade them. To this wonton obstacle and in a measure to be attributed to it, must be added the yearly increasing demands of the performers, already so fully entered upon, which in their progression have done most, but not all, of the mischief they will do. Then again the transportation to America, which had been sufficiently injurious without the aid of steam, and now has become absolutely ruinous, to the London stage. There is but one hope for this latter part of the business, which is, that scarcely a performer professing any pretensions to a refined taste, but returns from the land of Columbus so thoroughly disgusted, and by no means so richly rewarded as he expected to be, that no inducements will prevail on him to go back again.

These are the principal matters entertained in the preceding pages upon which I anxiously desire that my reader should cast

a retrospective glance, that he may be the better able to examine the issue, as I shall place it before him. Without the slightest wish to exalt myself, it is at all events my duty to prevent if possible, other people debasing me. I must state the difficulties I had to contend against, and I must state the way in which I did contend against them, leaving the reader of my doings to determine whether they were maintained creditably or otherwise. I have no desire to convince the numberless friends and supporters I for so many years have found and still possess. My object is to undeceive those who have mistaken the spleen of private calumny for the result of public opinion.

My attention had been directed, after I had made up my mind to the necessity of adopting this line of conduct, to some very clever strictures in a public print upon the subject, purporting to be a brief view of the English drama, with suggestions for ameliorating its condition. With a considerable portion of that laudible treatise I fully agree; and while I differ *toto cælo* with a great part of it, as demonstrated in many instances throughout these volumes, I respect the ability displayed in it, notwithstanding I believe its tenets to be mistaken.

The gravest charge, indeed the grand one, upon the pivot of which all minor ones turn, that has been preferred against me, consists of my having neglected the legitimate drama, and infected its dominions with gewgaw and pageantry, wherein sense has been compelled to give way to show: and that, in so doing, I have debased performers of eminence, whose genius was capable and worthy of better employment. I suppose the reader to have made up his mind as to what the legitimate drama really is; if he has not, perhaps the following dialogue between Mr. T. S. Duncombe, M.P. and Mr. Douglas Jerrold, dramatic author, extracted from the "Minutes of Evidence before a Select Committee of the House of Commons on Dramatic Literature," may enable him to do so.

*Mr. Duncombe.*—Was not *Midas* first produced at the Royalty Theatre?

*Mr. D. Jerrold.*—Mr. Garrick was produced there, and played the legitimate drama.

*Mr. Duncombe.*—How do you describe the legitimate drama?

*Mr. D. Jerrold.*—I describe the legitimate drama to be where the interest of the piece is mental; where the situation of the piece is rather mental than physical. A melo-drama is a piece with what are called a great many telling situations—I would call that a melo-drama. I would not call a piece like *The Hunchback* a melo-drama, because the interest of the piece is of a mental order.

*Mr. Duncombe.*—A piece rather addressed to the eye than to the ear?

*Mr. D. Jerrold.*—Certainly.

*Mr. Duncombe.*—Is Tom Thumb a legitimate drama?

*Mr. D. Jerrold.*—Tom Thumb is a burlesque.

*Mr. Duncombe.*—That goes under the head of the legitimate drama now?

*Mr. D. Jerrold.*—yes.

Supposing which is not at all unlikely to be the case, that, upon a perusal of this interrogatory, the reader is still unenlightened, it may not be very far from the mark to say, that under the head of the **LEGITIMATE DRAMA** may be classed all the works of Shakspeare, Ben Johnson, Massinger, Beaumont and Fletcher, Rowe, Otway, Lee, Southern, Addison, Garrick, Cibber, Goldsmith, Vanburgh, Steele, Colman, Colman the younger, Sheridan, Cumberland, Murphy, Young, Centlivre, Cowley, Lord Byron, Joanna Baillie, Knowles, &c. &c.; most of whose writings are of a high mental order, and most of them appealing rather to the ear than to the eye. A manager who, during a long connexion with the London stage, has attempted to do justice to the works of such ornaments to the dramatic literature of their country as the above recited men, cannot consistently be accused of neglecting the legitimate drama; and when it is taken into consideration with what a set of performers he had to go through so difficult a task, I think he will be acknowledged to be a bolder legitimatist than he has left behind him.

That a correct opinion may be formed by the reader of the justice or the injustice of the damnatory attacks that have been made upon me, not so much to knock me down (though having that effect) as to uphold another, (also having that effect,) I will "show his eyes, and grieve his heart," with a catalogue of my legitimate crimes. Between the beginning of the season 1832-33, and the end of the season 1838-39, (consisting of my recent uninterrupted management of the London theatres, and having no reference to my former stage management of Drury Lane Theatre,) the acting plays, with but one or two exceptions, of the immortal Shakspeare have been represented *two hundred and sixty-two nights*, while the works of our other less gifted but noble writers enumerated above, have in the same space of time been performed *three hundred and six times*. In this period no account must be taken of my last season 1838-39, because the arrangements of it were of necessity made to the exclusion of any thing but opera, ballet, and spectacle; therefore, in the six preceding seasons of 1832-33, 1833-34, 1834-35, 1835-36, 1836-37, and 1837-38, the legitimate drama was played, under my management, *five hundred and sixty-eight nights*, nearly one half of the number of nights on which we had *any PERFORMANCE*. To prevent the possibility of any mistake occurring to cast back into the teeth of those who have

made such misstatements, their own unworthy assertions, and at the same time to maintain *my own* assertions by documentary matter, I subjoin the particulars of these performances, which can be checked by any one sufficiently interested, who will take the trouble of referring to their files of playbills:—

“Number of nights in each of the following six seasons, when the plays of Shakspeare were performed at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane and Covent Garden, under the management of Mr. Bunn, collated for the satisfaction of those who have asserted that they were never played at all:

	No. of Shakspeare's Plays.
In the season 1832—33 were given	33
In the season 1833—34 were given	56
In the season 1834—35 were given	39
In the season 1835—36 were given	29
In the season 1836—37 were given	42
In the season 1837—38 were given	63
Total representations of Shakspeare	262

In this number will be found almost every one of the poet's plays which keep possession of the stage; and that the reader may judge which were most run after by the people, I subjoin the list of them, with the stated times each was played in this period:—

	Times.
1. <i>The Tempest</i> was performed	4
2. <i>Macbeth</i>	41
3. <i>Hamlet</i>	36
4. <i>Cymbeline</i>	1
5. <i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>	3
6. <i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	2
7. <i>Henry IV.</i> (first part)	15
8. <i>Henry IV.</i> (second part)	8
9. <i>Richard II.</i>	2
10. <i>Richard III.</i>	34
11. <i>Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	8
12. <i>Othello</i>	47
13. <i>Coriolanus</i>	5
14. <i>Julius Cæsar</i>	3
15. <i>King John</i>	4
16. <i>Henry VIII.</i>	7
17. <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	5
18. <i>Henry V.</i>	1
19. <i>Merchant of Venice</i>	11
20. <i>Twelfth Night</i>	3
21. <i>As you Like it</i>	5
22. <i>Winter's Tale</i>	3
23. <i>King Lear</i>	14
Grand total of times	262

Having shown how far, with the most anti-Shaksperian set  
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of actors that (save and except in an instance or two) ever crossed the London stage, a becoming degree of homage was paid to the fountain head, the source of all the dramatic glory of the country, I will enter into the same minutiae, as far as may be necessary, of the respect that was paid to the lesser, but still brilliant luminaries of the British drama,—after the following fashion.

Number of nights in each of the following six seasons, when pieces coming under the denomination of THE LEGITIMATE DRAMA, were played at the Theatres Royal Drury Lane and Covent Garden, under Mr. Bunns Management, with the names of the authors affixed to each.

## IN THE SEASON 1832-33.

	No. of nights performed.
The School for Scandal, by <i>Sheridan</i>	8
Jane Shore, by <i>Rousse</i>	1
The Revenge, by <i>Dr. Young</i>	2
Every Man in his Humour, by <i>Ben Jonson</i>	2
A New Way to Pay Old Debts, by <i>Massinger</i>	1
The Jealous Wife, by <i>Colman</i>	4
The Clandestine Marriage, by <i>Colman and Garrick</i>	3
She Stoops to Conquer, by <i>Goldsmith</i>	2
William Tell, by <i>Knowles</i>	4
The Hunchback, by <i>Knowles</i>	3
The House of Colberg, by <i>Serle</i>	4
Who Wants a Guinea? by <i>Colman</i>	2
Brutus, from <i>Cumberland</i> and others	1
Busy Body, by <i>Mrs. Centlivre</i>	1
She Would and She would not, by <i>Cibber</i>	2
The Hypocrite, by <i>Bickerstaff</i>	2
The Duenna, by <i>Sheridan</i>	1
Virginus, by <i>Knowles</i>	2
Way to get Married, by <i>Morton</i>	2
The Souldier's Daughter, by <i>Cherry</i>	2

49

By this first statement it will be seen that *eighty-two nights* (33 and 49) out of about two HUNDRED, were devoted between Shakspeare and other writers of less renown, to what is looked upon as the legitimate drama. Perhaps, as we progress, we shall find that other seasons, directed to the same unfortunate object, went to a greater extent:—

## IN THE SEASON 1833-34.

	No. of nights performed.
The School for Scandal, by <i>Sheridan</i>	4
The Duenna, by <i>ditto.</i>	2
Sardanapalus, by <i>Lord Byron</i>	23
Werner, by <i>ditto.</i>	7
Virginus, by <i>Knowles</i>	4
William Tell, by <i>ditto</i>	3

The Stranger, by <i>Thompson</i> from <i>Kotzebue</i>	1
Jealous Wife, by <i>Colman the Elder</i>	1
Heir at Law, by <i>Colman the Younger</i>	1
Poor Gentleman, by <i>ditto</i>	3
Iron Chest, by <i>ditto</i>	1
Jane Shore, by <i>Rowe</i>	3
Venice Preserved, by <i>Otway</i>	1
Isabella, by <i>Southern</i>	1
Comus, by <i>Milton</i>	2
Alexander the Great, by <i>Lee</i>	3
Road to Ruin, by <i>Holcroft</i>	2
Belles' Stratagem, by <i>Cowley</i>	1
Hypocrite, by <i>Bickerstaff</i>	1
Speed the Plough, by <i>Morton</i>	1
Secrets Worth Knowing, by <i>ditto</i>	11
Wild Oats, by <i>O'Keef</i>	2
Honey Moon, by <i>Jobin</i>	1
Minister and Mercer, by <i>Bunn</i> from <i>Scribe</i>	41

Times 113

If the reader could but see the receipts produced by some of the foregoing bits of "legitimacy," especially the works of the elder and greater masters, he would set me down as a greater fool for having played them, perhaps the varlets considered me, when they stated I never *had* played them, but alas! there is plenty of evidence to come:

## IN THE SEASON 1834—35.

	No. of nights performed.
A New Way to Pay Old Debts, by <i>Massinger</i>	4
Venice Preserved, by <i>Otway</i>	1
Cato, by <i>Addison</i>	3
School for Scandal, by <i>Sheridan</i>	3
Rivals, by <i>ditto</i>	1
Duenna, by <i>ditto</i>	1
Revenge, by <i>Dr. Young</i>	1
Jane Shore, by <i>Rowe</i>	1
William Tell, by <i>Knowles</i>	1
Hunchback, by <i>ditto</i>	3
Grecian Daughter, by <i>Murphy</i>	1
Clandestine Marriage, by <i>Garrick and Colman the Elder</i>	2
Hypocrite, by <i>Bickerstaff</i>	2
Wheel of Fortune, by <i>Cumberland</i>	1
Road to Ruin, by <i>Holcroft</i>	4
Poor Gentleman, by <i>Colman the Younger</i>	3
Stranger, by <i>Thompson</i> from <i>Kotzebue</i>	3
Minister and Mercer, by <i>Bunn</i> , from <i>Scribe</i>	3
Brutus, by <i>Payne</i> , from <i>Cumberland</i> and others	1
Wild Oats, by <i>O'Keef</i>	3
Bertram, by <i>Maturin</i>	2
Patrician and Parvenu, by <i>Poole</i>	19
Werner, by <i>Lord Byron</i>	1
(Manfred, by <i>ditto</i> , 33 times, not included, for fear it should not be thought LEGITIMATE enough)	Times 64)

The devil take such legitimacy, say I. I wish I had, for fun's sake only, the time to come over again; my assistant should squeak out to some purpose! Now for some more of it:

## IN THE SEASON 1835-36.

	No. of nights performed.
The School for Scandal, by <i>Sheridan</i>	1
The Provoked Husband, by <i>Vanburgh</i>	3
Clandestine Marriage, by <i>Colman and Garrick</i>	1
Wild Oats, by <i>O'Keef</i>	1
Speed the Plough, by <i>Morton</i>	1
The Stranger, by <i>Thompson</i> from <i>Kotzebue</i>	1
Henriquez, by <i>Joanna Baillie</i>	1
Provost of Bruges, by <i>Lovell</i>	8
William Tell, by <i>Knowles</i>	1
Virginus, by <i>ditto</i>	1
Road to Ruin, by <i>Holcroft</i>	1
	<hr/>
	Times 20

A comparative let-off, being the season in which the **JEWESS** monopolized so large a portion of the season; and yet, with all this, Shakspeare was played twenty-nine nights, and the legitimates twenty nights! O dear! more yet, though:

## IN THE SEASON 1836-37.

	No. nights performed.
Jane Shore, by <i>Rowe</i>	2
School for Scandal, by <i>Sheridan</i>	1
Gladiator, by <i>Dr. Bird</i>	4
Brutus, by <i>Payne</i> from others	1
Damon and Pythias, by <i>Banim</i>	3
Wrecker's Daughter, by <i>Knowles</i>	14
Virginus, by <i>ditto</i>	2
Hunchback, by <i>ditto</i>	1
	<hr/>
	Times 28

Shakspeare and the other legitimates were played this season **SEVENTY NIGHTS**, being more than one-third of the entire season; and if the people had not enough of it, I can only say *I* had a great deal too much. The last season of my management, when any thing of the kind was played, stands thus:

## IN THE SEASON 1837-38.

The School for Scandal, by <i>Sheridan</i>	1
The Duenna, by <i>ditto</i>	1
Caractacus, by <i>Beaumont and Fletcher</i>	11
New Way to Pay Old Debts, by <i>Massinger</i>	6
The Poor Gentleman, by <i>Colman</i>	3
The Iron Chest, by <i>ditto</i>	1
Belles' Stratagem, by <i>Mrs. Cowley</i>	3
She Stoops to Conquer, by <i>Goldsmith</i>	4
Hypocrite, by <i>Bickerstaff</i>	1
Road to Ruin, by <i>Holcroft</i>	1
	<hr/>
	Times 32

In this last "legitimate" season we played Shakspeare "SIXTY-THREE TIMES," and other writers for the ear and not the eye "THIRTY-TWO NIGHTS," making together very nearly ONE-HALF THE ENTIRE SEASON. With what impressions must a man take up his pen, and state that "Mr. Bunn never played the legitimate drama," when the damning record, just introduced, was in existence? The writings of the party in question evince too much talent, generally, to admit for one moment the supposition that he could be ignorant of the facts herein detailed—consequently the perversion of them could have no other object than to degrade me in public opinion, and to do me essential injury.

Having given a precise account, which any one has the power of checking who has filed the play-bills of the time, of *two hundred and sixty-two* representations of the acting plays of the immortal dramatic poet, *three hundred and six* representations of the writings of other dramatists, coming exclusively under the denomination of mental works, and as such classed under the title of legitimacy, I should very like to know the opinion of this writer (and he is by no means singular in the assertion he has made) as to what constitutes the legitimate drama, if the pieces herein cited do not? Is it not then perfectly monstrous that men of intellect should be found to propagate such unblushing falsehoods, merely for the purpose of sustaining their own argument, or of debasing him on whose actions they are founding it? It would take me more time than I have either the heart or the inclination to devote, to give the receipts of the treasury on most of the evenings when this LEGITIMATE GAME has been playing; and I will therefore content myself by observing that, beyond any question, ONE legitimate drama was played nearly as often as all the rest put together, and that was 'THE ROAD TO RUIN!

Another part of my stewardship, however, remains to be recorded, by which the representation of these pieces must after all be tested; and as it forms the second part of the great charges against me, it must be met as boldly as the former one. After having so shamefully neglected the legitimate drama as to play it five hundred and sixty-eight nights out of about twelve hundred, (nearly one half the time,) let us see how wantonly I ill used the performers, by letting all the best talent slip through my fingers, and by placing my reliance upon quadrupeds and bipeds. In order to do this, I herewith subjoin an enumeration of the different principal performers, who, during the foregoing period, have been engaged with me in the various classifications of the drama, and whose talents have



been called forth in support of the precious list of "legitimacy," with which the reader has been regaled. They are arranged alphabetically, that no offence may be given, on the score of priority, to those who think themselves cleverer people than the world gives them credit for being.

PRINCIPAL PERFORMERS engaged and introduced at various times at the Theatres Royal, Drury Lane, and Covent Garden, while under Mr. Bunn's management:—

#### IN TRAGEDY.

*Messrs.* Butler, Bennett, G. Booth, Baker, Cooper, Cooke, H. Cooke, F. Denvil, Diddear, Forrest (*of America*), Jones G. (*of America*), Kean, Kean C., Knowles, King, Lee, Macready, Mathews, Perkins, Powell, Pannier, Serle, Stanley, Ternan, Vandenhoff, Wallack, Warde, Wood, Younge.

*Mesdames* Allison, Bartley, Clifton (*of America*), Faucit, Faucit H., Huddart, Hooper, Lovell, Phillips, Phillips E., Placide (*of America*), Sloman, Sharpe (*of America*), Tree E., Ternan, Vandenhoff.

#### IN COMEDY.

*Messrs.* Ayliffe, Bartley, Bennett W. Burke, Balls, Barnett, Barnett M., (*of America*), Buckstone, Blanchard, Brindal, Compton, Chippendale, Downton, Farren, Green, Harley, Hooper, Hughes, Hill, (*of America*), Hackett (*of America*), Jones R., Keeley, Liston, Meadows, Power, Rayner, Russell, S. Russell, J. Shuter, Tayleur, Turnour, Vining, F. Webster, Yates.

#### IN OPERA.

*Messrs.* Allen, Anderson, Braham, Balfe, Bedford, Cooke T., Duruset, Fraser, Giubeli, Giubeli A., Henry, Jones S., Martyn, Mears. Phillips H., Ransford, Sinclair, Smith G., Stansbury, Templeton, Wood, Wilson, Yarnold.

*Mesdames* Atkinson, Albertazzi, Anderson, Bishop, Betts, Cawse, Cawse H., Chester, Forde, Hamilton, Healey, Inverarity, Newcombe, Poole, Penley, Pearson, Romer, Rainforth, Seguin E., Shirreff, Wood, Wyndham F., Woodham.

#### IN BALLET, PANTONIME, MELO-DRAMA, AND SPECTACLE.

*Messrs.* Barnes, Cooke T. P., Ducrow, Ellar, Farley, Gilbert, Howell, Hatton, Mathews T., M'lan, Marshall, Payne W. H., Southby, Sutton, Weiland, Wallack H., Van Amburgh.

*Mesdames* Ballin, Marshall, O'Brien, Vining, &c, &c, exclusive of a host of minor performers, the largest and most effective chorus, and the most numerous corps de ballet ever produced upon the boards of the winter theatres.

## THE ORCHESTRA

at various times has comprised the principal native talent, occasionally aided by such auxiliaries as Bochsa, Bonner, Cooke G., Distin, Dennan, Dragonetti, Eigstoft, Harper, Keilbach, Lindley, Nicholson, Puzzi, Price, Smart, &c. &c.; and has been at different times conducted, and led, by Bishop, Balfe, Bennedict, Cooke T., Costa, Eliason, Mori, Negri, Nadaud, &c., &c.

## THE SCENIC DEPARTMENT

has been directed and supported by Mr. Grieve, T. Grieve, W. Grieve, Stanfield, Marinari, Andrews, &c.

By an examination of this extensive list it will be perceived that scarcely an English performer of any note, was known to, or connected with, the stage during that period, whose name is not to be found therein enumerated. I wish particularly to direct attention to this fact, because, amongst other high crimes and misdemeanours laid to my door, has been the charge of totally neglecting NATIVE talent for the purpose of introducing FOREIGN talent. A more impudent falsehood never was invented, as the previous recitation will demonstrate. Having upon all occasions endeavoured to procure the best abilities of our own country, as soon as I had so done I made a point of introducing as much talent of other countries as was attainable: and as the reader has been regaled with the enumeration of the one, I will trouble him with that of the other:

PRINCIPAL FOREIGN ARTISTES introduced at various times at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, and Covent Garden, while under Mr. Bunn's management:

*Messieurs* Albert, Albert *fils*, Anatole, Arnal, Begrez, Bochsa, Bull Ole, Benedict, Catone, Curioni, Costa, Coulon, de Berliot, De Begnis, D'Angeli, Deshayes, Guerinot, Galli, Ivanhoff, Lablache, Lablache F., Mazillier, Mori, Paul, Paganini, Perrot, Regondi, Rubini, Silvain, Tamburini, Taglioni père, Taglioni Paul.

*Mesdames* Adele, Ancellin, Augusta, Brambilla, Blasis, Chevalign, Celeste, Caradori, Cava, Castelli, De Merci, Duvernay, Dulcken, Dupont, Devrient Schroeder, Elsler F., Elsler L, Elsler H., Grisi, Grisi Carlotta, Giannoni, Giubellie Proche, Kessler, Leroux Pauline, Le Comte, Malibran, Noblet, Pasta, Stockhausen, Schieron, Taglioni, Taglioni Paul, Vagon, Vertpre, Varin.

As this last comprises the names of nearly all the eminent performers of Europe, who, during the period, have visited this country, I think it may not be considered a vain boast to state

that, at all events, the good people had enough for their money. Will my contemporaries, whose partisans have been pleased to favour me with so much of their censure, or will my successors, now I am beyond the censure of *any* partisans, have the goodness to display any such attractions, as their names hold out? Impossible! and yet I have seen their various exertions held up as an example worthy of imitation, and described as being far beyond any that were ever made by ME!

Having given a detail of the legitimate productions during my period of office, and exhibited the names of those by whom such productions were sustained, it is necessary to enumerate the novelties, legitimate and otherwise, that were submitted for public approbation, and to show to what extent that approbation was carried:

Names of Pieces.	Authors or Adaptors.	Composers.	No. of nights of their first season.
<b>TRAGEDIES AND TRAGIC PLAYS.</b>			
Sardanapalus . . . . .	Lord Byron		23
Wrecker's Daughter . . . .	Knowles		14
Provost of Bruges . . . . .	Lovell		8
Gladiator . . . . .	Dr. Bird.		5
House of Colberg . . . . .	Serle		5
Henriquez . . . . .	Baillie		1
<b>COMEDIES.</b>			
Patrician and Parvenu . . . .	Poole		16
The Minister and Mercer . . .	Bunn		41
Wedding Gown . . . . .	Jerrold		29
<b>OPERAS.</b>			
Gustavus the Third . . . . .	Planché	Auber	100
The Red Mask . . . . .	do.	Marliani	26
The Challenge ( <i>after Easter</i> ) . .	do.	Herold	23
The Magic Flute . . . . .	do.	Mosart	19
Don Juan . . . . .	Beazley	do.	20
The Siege of Corinth . . . . .	Planché	Rossini	23
Guillaume Tell . . . . .	Bunn	do.	36
Maid of Artois ( <i>after. May 27</i> ) .	do.	Balfe	20
Lestocq . . . . .	do.	Auber	41
The Bronze Horse . . . . .	do.	do.	28
Maid of Cashmere . . . . .	Fitzball	do.	28
Maid of Palaiseau . . . . .	Bishop	Rossini	12
Siege of Rochelle . . . . .	Fitzball	Balfe	73
Joan of Arc . . . . .	do.	do.	22
Gipsy's Warning ( <i>after Easter</i> ) .	Peake & Linley	Benedict	23
The Corsair ( <i>after March</i> ) . . .	Ball	Herold	13
Catherine Grey . . . . .	Linley	Balfe	4
Diadeste ( <i>after Easter</i> ) . . . .	Fitzball	do.	16
Fair Rosamond . . . . .	Barnett	Barnett	17
Farinelli . . . . .	do.	do.	22
<b>SPECTACLES.</b>			
St. George and the Dragon . . .	Bernard.		63

## LIST OF PIECES.

233

King Arthur and the Knights . . . . .	Pocock	69
The Jewess . . . . .	Planché	84
Manfred . . . . .	Lord Byron	43
Chevy Chace . . . . .	Planché	30
Charlemagne . . . . .	Bernard	36
<i>(The Lions in this and other pieces were exhibited 115 times.)</i>		
Caractacus . . . . .	Planché	12
Cavaliers and Roundheads . . . . .	Pocock	9

## BALLET.

Revolt of the Harem . . . . .	Bunn	43
The Sleeping Beauty . . . . .	do.	17
Devil on Two Sticks . . . . .	do.	48
Fairy Slipper <i>(after Easter)</i> . . . . .	do.	23
The Storm . . . . .	do. <i>(a mess!)</i>	3
Daughter of the Danube . . . . .	Gilbert	47
The Spirit of Air . . . . .	do.	32
The Little Hunchback . . . . .	Peake	18

## FARCES AND INTERLUDES.

Pleasant Dreams . . . . .	C. Dance	12
Forget and Forgive . . . . .	do.	9
Petticoat Government . . . . .	G. Dance	11
Now or Never . . . . .	do.	7
The Regent . . . . .	Planché	17
Secret Service . . . . .	do.	24
Reflection . . . . .	do. Mrs.	8
Tam O'Shanter . . . . .	Addison	37
The King's Seal . . . . .	do.	12
Our Mary Anne . . . . .	Buckstone	15
The King's Word . . . . .	Mrs. Gore	7
A Soldier's Courtship . . . . .	Pool	13
Mr. and Mrs. Pringle . . . . .	Trueba	21
Scan. Mag. . . . .	Pocock	26
Meltonians <i>(after Easter)</i> . . . . .	Peake	21
The Nervous Man . . . . .	Bernard	10
Yankee Pedlar . . . . .	do.	6
Chimney Piece . . . . .	Rodwell	13
My Neighbour's Wife . . . . .	Bunn	68
Good-Looking Fellow . . . . .	Bunn & Kenney	25

## MELO-DRAMAS.

The Ferry and Mill . . . . .	Pocock	23
Child of the Wreck . . . . .	Planché	21
Travelling Carriage . . . . .	do.	8
Indian Girl . . . . .	Bernard	4
Hazard of the Die . . . . .	Jerrold	11
The Note Forger . . . . .	Fitzball	12
Carl Milhan . . . . .	do.	12
King of the Mist . . . . .	do.	8

## PANTOMIMES.

Harlequin and Queen Mab . . . . .	Reynolds	34
Harlequin Gammer Gurton . . . . .	do.	34
Harlequin Jack-a-lantern . . . . .	do.	41
Harlequin and Jack Frost . . . . .	do.	42
Old Mother Hubbard . . . . .	Farley	34
Wittington and his Cat . . . . .	do.	24
Harlequin Traveller . . . . .	Peake	29

This list is exclusive of the enchanting opera of *La Sonnambula*, (by BRAZLEY,) *Fidelio*, (by LOGAN,) and *Norma*, (by PLANCHE,) produced for the first time in an English garb, to give the public an opportunity of witnessing the unsurpassed genius of Madame Malibran, and the extraordinary talents of Madame Schroeder Devrient. Neither is any notice taken in it of the various divertisements that were arranged, at various times, for the exertions of the eminent French dancers, who so frequently contributed to the delight of the town. There might, moreover, be added to it three or four pieces of doubtful success, whose existence extended to no more than two or three nights, and five pieces that were particularly "well damned" off hand.

In looking thoroughly over the foregoing account, the reader, I am vain enough to think, will find repeated traces of the dramatic enjoyments he experienced during the period it refers to; and as an additional evidence of the popularity of many of them, beyond the number standing against them, may be stated that most of the music which has become so familiar and so pleasing to the people as to be conveyed to them day by day on their own delightful organs, (the street ones,) belong to some one or other of the operas herein enumerated. Beautifully and truly indeed hath the modern Anacreon sung, in his own unrivalled strain,

Music! O how faint, how weak,  
 Language fades before thy spell;  
 Why should language ever speak  
 When thou canst tell her tale so well!

I think I have quoted right, at least I hope so. Combining, therefore, the legitimate and the illegitimate accounts, it cannot be denied that every variety was afforded to the lovers and followers of each. I must not omit noticing another circumstance which gave the snarlers an opportunity of showing their teeth, indicative of their propensity to bite, if they could. I approach this part of the business delicately, because it is personal, and bearing in mind that Shakspeare has put into the mouth of *Cæsar*,

"What touches us ourself shall be last served."

I have kept it back until worthier matter has been disposed of. It will be seen that under the heading of "authors and adapters," my own name figures pretty conspicuously; and it has been repeatedly charged against me, that I neglected the works of other far superior dramatists, for the purpose of stuffing my own goods down the throats of the suffering public. Though as daring a falsehood as any of the other fabrications "got up" against my management, it was not a bad lay for

the malecontents to go upon, considering the repeated opportunities I gave them of indulging in their propensity. But I will explain my motives and my objects. I am quite as willing to admit my own inferiority to *SOME*, as I should be to maintain my superiority to *MANY*, if boasting were my trade; but that part of the business never once entered my head: but being rapid in the execution of what I *do* do, finding others extremely slow, and knowing the urgency of our condition, I have over and over again, after rising at six, writing till eleven, attending rehearsals of three and four hours' duration, superintending the ordinary duties of management, such as answering letters, auditing accounts, going over the departments, conferring with the many seeking conferences, issuing general orders, and "orders for two," &c. &c., had to sit up the greatest part of the night to complete a subject. Few other people will do for you what you will do for yourself; and as I never desired to have my effusions weighed in the standard-scales of dramatic literature, I cared little about the critics, as long as I could arrest the attention of the town. I must leave the town to determine how often I succeeded in so doing, while I attempt to vindicate myself from so unjust an aspersion. I will dare any one to say that I did not avail myself, as frequently as possible, of all the talent of all those worth availing oneself of—of our darling master Knowles, whenever I could get hold of him; of my able, industrious, and zealous friend Planche—of—of—but let us name them—"Name, name, if you please"—of those who worked for *our* treasury, and, with an exception or two, *their own*, at the same time: Addison, Beazley, Bird, Bailley, Ball, Byron, Barnett, Bernard, Buckstone, Dance C., Dance G., Fitzball, Farley, Gore Mrs., Jerrold, Knowles, Kenny, Lovell, Logan, Linley, Millingen, Pocock, Poole, Planche, Planche Mrs., Peake, Reynolds, Rodwell, Serle, Trueba, Westmacott R., &c.

If it had not been for the extraordinary terms demanded for the *Duchess de la Valière*, previously commented upon, and for the assault committed by Mr. Macready, that led to the withdrawal of *Ion*, (which was to have been brought out for that tragedian's benefit,) the names of Sir E. L. Bulwer and Mr. Sergeant Talfourd would have been added to this list, and it is, therefore, not too much to say, that there was scarcely a dramatic author of any reputation, during my management of the London stage, whose works were not introduced on the boards of Drury Lane or Covent Garden Theatres; and while with the finest music of such ancient foreign composers as Auber, Bellini, Herold, Halevey, Mozart, Marliani, Mayerbeer, Rosini, Weber, &c. &c., was brought

forward in rapid succession the various contributions of Messrs. Balfe, Barnett, Benedict, Bishop, Cooke T., Loder, Lacy, &c. &c. will surely bear out my assertion, that native talent was equally encouraged.

Of a variety, these defamers, who have been so long trying to hold me up to ridicule, "cut a mighty ridiculous figure;" but they shall cut a worse, as I follow them up, by every possible degree of COMPARISON. Such a pompous and ridiculous parade has been hawked about of the mode in which Shakspeare's plays were represented, and were prepared, under the sublime management of Mr. Macready, that I take the liberty of questioning it again, as I have already so frequently done. The hasty attempt of "*King Lear*, from the text of Shakspeare," he did before with me, both at Drury Lane and Covent Garden, consequently there was no novelty in THAT. The restoration of "the text of Shakspeare" in other plays was a mere joke, being resorted to only as it set off to better advantage the hero of the piece. The *Macbeth*, about which such a flourish was made, claimed the blessing, to be sure, of his own performance, (and we claimed that of Mr. Forrest;) but while its exquisite music was, comparatively speaking, shuffled through by a few voices at Covent Garden, I gave it the benefit of THIS SUPPORT at Drury Lane, by virtue whereof the celebrated chorus of witches obtained the unprecedented honour of a nightly *encore*. Here are the names of the following eminent vocal performers:

*Messrs.* Balfe, Templeton, Wilson, Giubelei, Anderson, Bedford, Duruset, Henry, S. Jones, Seguin, &c.; *Mesdames* Shirreff, Romer, Poole, Forde, Taylor, C. Jones, Humby, &c., accompanied by the following double chorus and the enlarged band:

*Altos*.—Messrs. Miller, Lloyd, Rakes, Ashton, Lewis, Willing, Walsh, Healey, Chant, Hammond, &c. &c.

*Tenors*.—Messrs. C. Tett, S. Tett, Birt, Morgue, W. Price, Goodson, Nye, Jones, J. Price, J. Taylor, &c. &c.

*Basses*.—Messrs. Caulfield, Santry, Atkins, Barclay, Green, Butler, Caro, Field, Macarthy, Tolkien.

*Soprani*.—Mesdames Hamilton, Somerville, Allcroft, Boden, Perry, Goodson, Hughes, East, Barnett, Connelly, Butler, H. Bodon, Goodwin, Mapleson, &c.

Then again, when unable by "the voice of the public press," to cram down the public gorge his own performance of *Hamlet*, we played that sublime tragedy *twenty-one nights* in the space of two months!

Then, as to *Othello*, can all the play-bills of the gentleman who undertook to *advance the drama as a branch of literature and art*, produce such a "cast" of its principal characters, as

on two distinct occasions was given by me at Drury Theatre?—  
Read:

In 1833.		In 1835.	
Othello . . .	Mr. Kean.	Othello . . .	Mr. Macready.
Iago . . .	Mr. Macready.	Iago . . .	Mr. Vandenhoff.
Cassio . . .	Mr. Cooper.	Cassio . . .	Mr. Cooper.
Roderigo . . .	Mr. Balls.	Brabantio . . .	Mr. Warde.
Desdemona . . .	Miss Phillips.	Roderigo . . .	Mr. Harley.
Emilia . . .	Mrs. Faucit.	Desdemona . . .	Mrs. Yates.
		Emilia . . .	Miss E. Tree.

Then, again, let us look at the announcement of *The Tempest*, about which such a trumpety fuss was made, and see if we did not go as far towards *the advancement of the drama*, even as “Shakspeare’s representative,” which is surely saying a great deal. *His* means of representing it shall be placed in *juxtaposition* with *mine*:

## THE TEMPEST.

AT DRURY LANE IN 1833,

altered by Davenant and Dryden.	
Alonzo . . .	Mr. Diddear.
Prospero . . .	Mr. Macready.
Antanio . . .	Mr. Mathews.
Ferdinand . . .	Mr. Cooper.
Hyppolito . . .	Miss Taylor.
Gonzalo . . .	Mr. Younge.
Caliban . . .	Mr. Bedford.
Trinculo . . .	Mr. Blanchard.
Stephano . . .	Mr. Dowton.
Miranda . . .	Miss Inverarity.
Dorinda . . .	Miss. Sheriff.
Ariel . . .	Miss Poole.

## THE TEMPEST

AT COVENT GARDEN IN 1838,

from “the text of Shakspeare.”	
Alonzo . . .	Mr. Warde.
Prospero . . .	Mr. Macready.
Antonio . . .	Mr. Phelps.
Ferdinand . . .	Mr. Anderson.
Sebastian . . .	Mr. Diddear.
Gonzalo . . .	Mr. Waldron.
Caliban . . .	Mr. G. Bennett.
Trinculo . . .	Mr. Harley.
Stephano . . .	Mr. Bartley.
Miranda . . .	Miss H. Faucit
Dorinda . . .	<i>Not in the piece</i>
Ariel . . .	Miss P. Horton

Then, again, can he produce any “*cast*” of any one of the finest plays of our olden masters, to be compared to the following distribution of characters in Ben Johnson’s *Every man in his Humour*, played at Drury Lane in 1833?

Kitely . . . . .	Mr. Macready.
Bobadil . . . . .	Mr. Power.
Edward Know’ell . . . . .	Mr. Cooper.
Brainworm . . . . .	Mr. Farren.
Justice Clement . . . . .	Mr. Dowton.
Master Stephen . . . . .	Mr. Harley.
Wellbred . . . . .	Mr. Stanley.
Cob . . . . .	Mr. Bedford.
Dame Kitely . . . . .	Mrs. Nesbit.
Bridget . . . . .	Miss Cawse.
Tib . . . . .	Mrs. C. Jones.

Then, again, while I can produce half a dozen such instances of musical strength, I will content myself by asking if the great



restorator of the drama ever "cast" an opera with the force *Don Juan* was supported by at Drury Lane in 1833?

Don Juan . . . . .	Mr. Braham.
Don Ottavio . . . . .	Mr. Templeton.
Don Pedro . . . . .	Mr. Bedford.
Mazetto . . . . .	Mr. E. Seguin.
Leporollo . . . . .	Mr. H. Phillips.
Donna Anna . . . . .	Madame de Meric.
Donna Elvira . . . . .	Miss Betta.
Zerlina . . . . .	Mrs. Wood.

These be pleasant and useful recollections of a state of things we shall not soon again see realized, and afford a retrospection which, I very much doubt, if "Shakspeare's representative" had remained in power three times as long as he did, he would be able to indulge in. True it is, I never made a set of unmeaning promises, and took my own method of fulfilling them: I did not exclude those on whom virtue sits uneasy—because they brought a great deal of money to the treasury: I did not put myself in all the principal characters, regardless of the feelings or reputation of those who played the other ones;" and I did not, in fact, make "much ado about nothing;" but I shall be perfectly content to abide the decision of the public, on a dispassionate comparison of our respective exertions, whether I did not far surpass every effort of his, *to advance the drama as a branch of literature and art!* The result of our proceedings was, that, by a timely retreat, he was enabled to demand £25 per night for his services in another theatre, and I was—ruined! So would he have been, had he toiled as many years at his undertaking as I did at mine.

As respects the present management, which succeeded his, as far at least as it has gone during my progress with these volumes, though I would not be thought to disparage any effort of one claiming the meed of approbation which beauty and talent are always entitled to, nor to deny that great and praiseworthy energies have been bestowed by Madame Vestris on her perilous enterprize, yet I take the liberty of saying that one of the creditable performances which has distinguished her management, and won her "golden opinions," is not, at least, more entitled to public favour than a similar one given by me at Drury Lane—*ecce signum*:

#### THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

AT DRURY LANE IN 1833.

Sir Peter Teazle .	Mr. Farren.
Sir Oliver Surface .	Mr. Downton.
Joseph Surface .	Mr. Macready.
Charles Surface .	Mr. Cooper.

#### THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

AT COVENT GARDEN IN 1839.

Sir Peter Teazle .	Mr. Farren.
Sir Oliver Surface .	Mr. Bartley.
Joseph Surface .	Mr. Cooper.
Charles Surface .	Mr. Mathews.

Sir Benj. Backbite	Mr. Harley.	Sir Benj. Baekbite	Mr. Harley.
Sir Harry	Mr. Braham.	Sir Harry	Mr. Binge.
Crabtree	Mr. Ayliffe.	Crabtree	Mr. Meadows.
Trip	Mr. Balla.	Trip	Mr. Green.
Moses	Mr. Ross.	Moses	Mr. Keeley.
Lady Teazle	Mrs. Nesbitt.	Lady Teazle	Mad. Vestris.
Lady Sneerwell	Mrs. Faucit.	Lady Sneerwell	Mrs. Nesbitt.
Mrs. Caudour	Mrs. Glover.	Mrs. Caudour	Mrs. Orger.
Maria	Miss Cawse.	Maria	Miss Lee.

I think, without any disrespect to any party in question, that the comparison between these two "casts" must be considerably in my favour. But it is delightful to contrast the unpretending and admirable efforts of Madame Vestris with the bombastic froth and nothingness of her immediate predecessor: and even had she obtained no other advantage, the appearance of the theatre, under the respective managements, would be ample; for she may safely exclaim with *Julius Cæsar* (I believe) that "she found her city brick and made it marble."

Having now indulged the reader with a somewhat lengthened account of my legitimate and illegitimate performances, together with the names of the legitimate and illegitimate performers who were called in to support them; at the same time having furnished him with a compendium of the general nature of my humble efforts to manage the London stage, I should leave the very best and the very worst part of my task unfinished, if I did not add the result of it all. Having contributed my own slender means at starting, and added from time to time my various subsequent gainings towards the general good of the concern; having never received salary but when others did, and often received with one hand ten times less than I advanced with the other; having toiled day and night in winter and summer; travelled far and near, written and adapted, (bad enough if you please,) and done my best, (be it now deemed bad or good,) I can fearlessly insert the subjoined piece of documentary wretchedness; and while the high eulogium of the judge and the court is something to be proud of, I cannot deny that I wish it had pleased Providence that the opportunity of receiving it had not been afforded.

### COURT OF BANKRUPTCY.

*Basinghall Street, December the 17th 1840.*

[Before Mr. Commissioner Merivale.]

The bankruptcy of Alfred Bunn, late lessee and manager of the Theatres Royal Drury Lane and Covent Garden.

The bankrupt appeared before the court to pass his final examination. There were but few creditors present at this sitting.

After proofs had been admitted from Messrs. Peake, Eliason, Fitzball, Dunn, &c., for services rendered,

Mr. Wryghte, the accountant, handed in the balance sheet of the bankrupt.

The following is the general sheet, which shows a clear and elucidated statement of all the bankrupt's affairs:—

IN RE ALFRED BUNN, A BANKRUPT.

*From the 6th of December 1834 to the 4th of November 1839.*

<i>Dr.</i>			
On account of the theatres	.	£21,257	5 4
Money lent	.	1,526	9 8
Private tradesmen	.	702	16 2
			<hr/>
			23,486 11 2
Liabilities	.		4,300 0 0
Capital, December 6th, 1834	.		250 0 0
PROFITS. *			
Salary as manager, benefits, theatrical au-			
thorship, sale of musical compositions,			
country speculation of the Jewess, as			
per statement	.		6,668 0 0
			<hr/>
			34,704 11 2
<i>Cr.</i>			
On account of the theatres	.		2,276 3 8
Bad, and carried to losses	.	199	10 0
Losses	.		23,252 1 5
Expenses	.		4,860 0 0
Liabilities per contra	.		4,300 0 0
Amount unaccounted for	.		16 6 1
			<hr/>
			34,704 11 2

The undermentioned statement shows the losses incurred throughout the theatrical management of the bankrupt as exhibited in his balance sheet:—

*Losses by management of theatres from the 6th of December 1834.*

SEASON 1834—35.

(The bankrupt had both the patent theatres.)

Total expenditure. Journal A, fo. 347	£51,526	15 10	
Total receipts. Journal A, fol. 348	49,876	9 1	
			<hr/>
			1,650 6 9

SEASON 1835—36.

(The bankrupt had but one of the patent theatres.)

Total expenditure. Journal B, folio 28	59,183	1 9	
Total receipts. Journal B, folio 28	57,424	10 8	
			<hr/>
			1,758 11 1

\* A curious fact occurred in the profits. One of the items is the sum of £40 enclosed in a parcel, and sent to the bankrupt, by an unknown hand. He has never been able to trace the individual thus generously inclined towards him.

## SEASON 1836—37.

(The bankrupt had but one of the patent theatres.)

Total expenditure. Journal B, folio 69	44,582	5	4	
Total receipts. Journal B, folio 69	40,638	19	2	
				3,643 6 2

## SEASON 1837—38.

(The bankrupt had the Theatre Royal Drury Lane.)

Total expenditure. Journal B, folio 108	39,066	3	2	
Total receipts. Journal B, folio 108	36,053	12	1	
				3,012 11 1

## SEASON 1838—39.

(The bankrupt had the Theatre Royal Drury Lane.)

Total expenditure. Journal B, fol. 143	44,211	6	3	
Total receipts. Journal B, folio 143	28,947	6	3	
				15,264 0 0
				25,328 15 1
Rent and part of the above expenses payable by Captain Polhill				2,276 3 8
				£23,052 11 5

Mr. Commissioner Merivale having examined the accounts, said, that if any person wished to address the court upon the bankrupt's balance sheet, now was the time. He had heard from the official assignee that, as he was informed, there was no objection to his passing. Were the assignees present?

*Mr. Mapleston* replied in the affirmative.

*Mr. Lewis*, a solicitor to the fiat, said the accounts reflected great credit upon the bankrupt, and had entirely been made up from the books of the theatre, which had been uniformly and correctly kept. He also felt bound, in justice to the bankrupt, to state that his private debts did not far exceed £700, the remaining large sum having reference to the theatrical property, and in the liquidation of which, for a long period, he had been paying his own earnings. It was hoped that from £2,000 to £3,000 would be recovered for the benefit of the creditors.

*Mr. Commissioner Merivale*.—But I see that is under the head of doubtful debts.

*Mr. Lewis*.—Yes, your honour, because a law-suit must be first commenced.

*The Official Assignee*.—It appears that in his private expenditure he has not been extravagant.

*Mr. Commissioner Merivale*.—That is highly creditable to him, and ought to be known, as it is a public business. The losses have been large in the theatrical management.

*Mr. Mapleston*.—Mr. Bunn is not an individual instance, managers before him have also suffered.

*Mr. Commissioner Merivale.*—I see there is a rapid falling off in the receipts in three seasons of Mr. Bunn's management, from £57,000 to £28,000, more than one half. I suppose that occurred in consequence of the reduction of prices.

*Mr. Mapleston.*—It was the reduction of prices and the loss of public inclination for the last two seasons.

*Mr. Commissioner Merivale.*—It also appears that at the time the receipts were highest the disbursements were highest; the expenses must have been very heavy.

*Mr. Mapleston* replied in the affirmative.

*Mr. Commissioner Merivale* would make no farther observations. Did any of the creditors wish to put any questions?

No reply being made, the bankrupt having been formally examined, *Mr. Commissioner Merivale* declared the bankrupt passed.

The court then rose.

This document does not refer, of course, to that part of my management when the pecuniary responsibility was on another's shoulders. Viewing, therefore, all that *has* been done, and foreseeing all that is likely to be done, we may, I fear me, safely say of the management of the patent theatres,

"TO THIS FAVOUR it must come!"

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## CHAPTER XIII.

Pains and penalties give way to rhyme and reason—A probable suspension of both—Prospect of an epic poem overclouded—Spenser, Leigh Hunt, and Southey—A change desirable, not ending in a desirable change—Public meeting—Mr. Robins and Mr. Durrant—Lots of fun, and a little mischief—A loud report, but a false one—A slight mistake or two—How to draw up an advertisement—Defence of Mr. Bunn by a proprietor—Opinions of the whole body on Mr. Bunn for seven years—The chairman's individual opinion—Eating one's own words sometimes a tough mouthful—Straightforward correspondence—Sale at the auction mart, and a sail at sea—A good dinner and a bad speech—A grand finale.

HAVING overcome the painful and humiliating position of feeling bound, as a matter of honour, to give additional promulgation to one's own indignities and sufferance, on the principle adopted by *Lady Townley*, of taking "a great gulp, and swallowing it," I may more freely discuss all the petty miseries which immediately preceded their consummation. I had done with the theatre from the moment I found that it was impossible to produce *The Fairy Lake*, but I had not done with the embarrassments in which it had involved me; or, rather, some of the

parties connected with them had not done with me. Any reference to private matters, now the affairs which gave rise to exasperated feelings on either side are disposed of, can answer no earthly purpose but molestation; and having no desire to annoy those who, perhaps under a mistaken notion, did their utmost to annoy me, I let my page do the duty of my goblet, and say, with *Brutus*,

“In this I bury all unkindness.”

I have shaken hands with two parties who shall be nameless; and that sacred ceremony being performed, I regret if I have written even a syllable that may displease them, and for worlds would not here repeat one. My chief anxiety, on my retirement from the theatre was to pay my debts and vent my spleen, as far as both was practicable. I found the first part of the business impracticable—the other part of it I turned over in my mind, and began in what I considered to be a smart display of poetical merriment. It was originally intended to be an epic, taking a view of the stage in verse, aided by copious addenda of notes and illustrations; and I purposed that it should be written as if spoken by Mr. Macready in his own person, on his abdication of Covent Garden Theatre. I had intended to give him full license of animadversion on *my* management as well as on *his* own, and to extend his remarks to the profession and all in connexion with it. I began my sublime composition after the following fashion:—

1.

Now, worthy people, “going—going—gone!”  
 As saith my neighbour-quack, the auctioneer;  
 The best quotation I could pitch upon,  
 And so accordingly I use it here;  
 Were there no other reason, it, to one  
 And all, beyond a question must appear  
 That I’ve been “going” (it) these two years past,  
 As clearly as, that I am “gone” at last!

2.

Some sceptics who may envy me the pleasure  
 Which I derive from practising mine art,  
 Abuse my principle beyond all measure,  
 And that in terms, too, I take much to heart:  
 So having now again a little leisure,  
 All that I think and feel I shall impart;  
 He who receives an injury resents it,  
 And if he has a fit of spleen, he vents it.

3.

’Tis wisely writ, “Whatever is, is best,”  
 And heaven forbid that I should e’er gainsay it;  
 A precept simply, forcibly expressed,  
 And man is very prudent to obey it:  
 Though I heard one (I trust it was in jest,  
 And not as an example to display it,

Say of the theatres there was no doubt of it,  
 'Twere "best" for all that I at last was out of it.

I soon became of opinion, as the reader will easily imagine and readily join me in, that this promised to be a tremendous lot of rubbish, and I therefore abandoned the idea *in toto*. In the mean time, my difficulties continued to increase, and rhyme and reason both threatened to take their departure. When Spenser was made poet laureate, he was awarded the yearly emolument, since handed down, and so ludicrously and admirably hit off by Mr. Leigh Hunt, in his amusing parody on *Mr. Southey's Carmen Triumphale*, wherein he describes the laureate's annual perquisites to consist of

"Wearing bag-wigs and other princely raiment,  
 Glory to kings his song, a hundred pounds his payment!"

When this item of £100 came under the observation of the Lord Burleigh, that prudent councillor asked Queen Elizabeth whether she was in earnest in allotting so large a payment as that, **MERELY FOR A SONG!** and owing to Burleigh's remonstrance, the actual disbursement was a long time making its appearance. The suspense and the delay were vital to Spenser, who thus vented his spleen—at least so runs the story:

"I heard, that once upon a time  
 They promised **REASON** for my rhyme;  
 But from that time until this season,  
 I've had neither **RHYME** nor **REASON!**"

In some such dilemma as this did I find myself. I had no "**reason**," in Spenser's reading of the word, and my Pegasus could supply me with no rhyme. I tried all that I could, through the agency of a host of kind friends, (being able, thank God! to boast of as numerous an acquaintance as most folk,) to effect some understanding, or arrange some compromise with those who had demands against the theatre, all of which were of a professional nature, which probably accounts for the utter impossibility that manifested itself of doing any thing of the sort. While these matters were in agitation, or cogitation rather, the annual meeting of the proprietors of Drury Lane Theatre was held in the saloon of the theatre, at which a statement of the company's affairs was laid before the body by the secretary of the committee. In addition to a feeling of disappointment entertained towards me by most of them, except the sub-committee who knew me best, there was a spirit of dissatisfaction manifest between each other—too often the case when men are in a

muddle, and do not clearly see their way out of it. Of course *I* came in for a tolerable proportion of flagellation. I am not certain if I have said before, but if so it will bear repeating.

"The evil that men do lives after them,  
The good is oft interred with their bones."

They had forgotten how long I had worked for their property, on my own as well as others' responsibilities—what monies I had been the means of other lessees paying them, and what monies I had paid them myself. They had forgotten the vast improvements made in every department of their building; in short, they had forgotten every thing but that paramount desire, always uppermost in the human system, of seeking some change. They lost sight of even their own discontent with one another, in order to get rid of the incubus they considered me to be upon their property—unmindful of the ruin of my predecessors, and of the utter impossibility their own experience had taught them of finding a fit successor. George Robins was bent on getting rid of me, for which he was quite right; and however gagged at the time, I have been thankful to him ever since. Durrant was bent upon getting in Mr. Hammond, for which he was quite wrong; and however flattered at the time, Hammond will live to wish him at the devil for so doing. Between ourselves, I think Robins would have given a trifle if he could have got rid of Durrant at the same time—your committee and *ex*-committee man not having any holy love for one another. If men in such emergencies could but be prevailed upon to do the right, even while they resorted to the expedient, they should have rejoiced as long as they pleased in the glorious possession of their new tenant; but the utmost expression that should have escaped their lips respecting their old and long-tried tenant should have been a feeling of regret. They might surely have praised a man of whom they knew nothing, without abusing one of whom they knew a great deal. Perhaps it may be said, that is the very reason why they *did* abuse me. No such thing: they were guided solely by a love of change, and it would seem by their choice that they considered any change would be for the better. What do they think now? If *I* brought their theatre into disrepute and *mauvaise odeur*, after seven or eight years' hard fag, what have **THEY** brought it to? If, after introducing upon their boards all the collective talent of this and other countries, and with the assistance of that talent introducing some of the most popular entertainments ever seen upon them, I brought their theatre into positive disgrace, as they alleged,—pray what has my successor, (the pet choice of one of their body, and cried up by the whole of them at the meeting in question,) without any collective talent, and without the aid of one popular entertainment, brought their house



to! I should be truly sorry to say an unkind word against Mr. Hammond, who, it must have been known to all but the booby or two who affected to patronise him into the lesseeship, was totally unfit for that position. I speak only of those casual superintendents over the sub-committee who meet once a year to upset, or at least to question, all the proceedings of the past twelvemonth.

But mischief was altogether the order of the day at this assembly—for, leaving me out of the question, they were bent on the dismemberment of their own body, and were determined not to be satisfied until they had rid themselves of two parties—one as intellectual, and the other as strict a man of business as ever sat in council; and they placed in their stead one, and introduced another, of the greatest—but I shall wait until the new law of libel comes out before I finish the sentence. Oh! but to think on the rare nonsense which, for two or three hours, some of them did indulge in, at a time when they ought to have lost sight of all personal feelings, and only have considered how they could best steer their vessel through the troubled waters in which she was then floundering. But the report of their proceedings, taken from a competent public journal, is the best authority that can be adduced of a scene of so much absurdity, and it is therefore subjoined:—

#### “DRURY LANE THEATRE.

“On Wednesday afternoon, July 24, 1840, a meeting of the proprietors of Drury Lane Theatre was held in the saloon to receive the report of the general committee, and to elect a sub-committee, &c.: the Earl of Glengall in the chair.

“Mr. Dunn, the secretary, read the report, which stated that the delay in calling the present meeting (which was usually held at an earlier period of the year) was owing to the difficulties the committee had had to contend with in letting the theatre. After stating the necessity of some great reduction being made in the charges on the property, and expressing a hope that some final arrangement with respect to the rent-charge of the theatre would be made in the course of the present year, it suggested the propriety of coming to some arrangement with the new renters; for which purpose some meetings of both parties had been held, but without any satisfactory result. The committee then mentioned the liberal conduct of the ground landlord, the Duke of Bedford, (in reducing the rent by £500 a year,) adding, however, that it was a conditional surrender only, and liable to be recalled at any time, and added, that the rental of the theatre on which the poor-rate was assessed had lately been reduced by £2,165 per annum, and the other rates in proportion. The Report then stated, that the lessee, Mr. Bunn, finding the dif-

difficulties in which the committee were placed with respect to letting the theatre, had last year again become the lessee. Had he not done so, either the theatre must have been closed during the past season, or been conducted by the sub-committee. After great delay and difficulty, the committee had again let the theatre. The new lessee was Mr. Hammond, who had taken the theatre for three years, and from his known talent the committee anticipated the greatest success. They had received other tenders, and taken them into consideration; but some of them were not thought worthy of acceptance, and as to others, the parties making them were not in a condition to keep the terms originally proposed by themselves. The Report concluded by stating, that an alteration would be made in the system of selling free-admissions, which would tend to increase their value; that the accounts were audited and ready for inspection, and that the theatre required some substantial repairs, the expense of which would be defrayed out of a fund that had been set apart for that purpose."

On a motion that the Report be received and adopted.

Mr. Wells said, that a more meagre report he had never listened to in his life. He wished to have some information as to what were the duties of the general and sub-committee, and what were the dormant duties of the proprietors themselves?—*(Hear! hear!)*—He thought that a recently published pamphlet threw a considerable light upon the subject.

The chairman trusted that no farther notice would be taken of the pamphlet to which allusion had just been made, and that the meeting would at once proceed with the business for which it had been convened.

Mr. T. Welch said, the present was the proper time for asking questions, which, if not put now, would not be answered at all. He complained that the proprietors were treated more like dependents than proprietors by the general committee, and said the business of the general meeting was always huddled through in a very hurried manner, and it was impossible to get any information whatever from the committee.

Mr. Wells said, the pamphlet to which he had alluded was ordered to be printed by the last general meeting of the proprietors. He wished to know by whose authority its circulation had since been suppressed.

The chairman said, that, on consideration, the general committee were of opinion that the pamphlet had better not be circulated, and they therefore caused its suppression.

After some farther discussion relative to the suppression of the pamphlet,

The chairman said, that the committee were ready and will-

ing to answer any question that might be put to them. He would admit that the affairs of the theatre were not in a satisfactory state, yet he could assure the proprietors that the committee had done every thing that laid in their power for the benefit of the theatre, and all persons connected with it. It was but justice to Mr. Bunn to state, that he did all he could to support the interests of the theatre.—(*Hear!*)—The committee, however, were in this position, when they let him the theatre last year, that they could not get any body else to take it—(*hear!*)—and they delayed letting it to him until so late a period that he had the greatest difficulty in getting a company of performers. If he had not come forward and placed himself in the gap, the theatre must have fallen into the hands of the ground landlord.

Mr. George Robins begged to ask what rent Mr. Bunn had paid during the last three years for the theatre, and how much he was now in arrear? He believed that all he had paid towards the rent of last season was £1,350.

The chairman said that was the fact.

Major Naylor said, the rent Mr. Bunn agreed to pay was £6,000 a year. He now owed the proprietors £12,000, he having, during the last three years, paid altogether only £6,000.

Mr. Robins observed, that when he came into the room, he intended only to get an answer to one or two important questions connected with the bygone season; but, after reading the Report, he found himself compelled to travel out of his original intention, and make a commentary upon a document the most frightful and unsatisfactory that ever was presented to a public meeting. Mr. Robins assured Lord Glengall, that in the observations he should make, he intended nothing personal, but he had a duty to perform which he must and should discharge. His lordship had read the unfortunate statement without receiving in his progress one smile or congratulatory look. In bygone days things were different—something satisfactory could always be wedged in to save the Report, but in this case the noble lord evidently foretold that nothing but one universal feeling of condemnation could exist in respect to the account they had just given of their stewardship, and the committee therefore substituted a long useless commentary upon a real or supposed difference which existed with the new renters and the proprietors. But this could not avail them; we must come to facts, and the figures before us left no doubt of the truth upon which he intended to speak. First, his lordship told them of the difficulty of letting the theatre; to that he rejoined, that he believed the committee in their hearts never intended or desired any other

lessee except Mr. Bunn, or why put forth annually such an unmeaning advertisement? He (Mr. Robins) took the trouble to write a more suitable one three years ago, and if they had the least intention that the theatre should change hands, they would have adopted it; but let us look at the facts as they stand before us, and which no sophistry of the noble lord's Report could shake! Has Covent Garden been without a tenant during this period? Did not Mr. Osbaldistone pay £8,000 a year regularly for three years? and has not Mr. Macready paid £7,000 a year with equal punctuality during the last two years? At Covent Garden Theatre there is no arrears in the last three years; they had received £22,000! Now let us look at the sad reverse at Drury Lane: in three years £6,000 only had found its way into the treasury, although during the same period a minor theatre (the Haymarket) was actually paying £4,000 a year, and making great profits besides. But this is not all—"the worst remains behind." The boards upon which the plays of the immortal bard have been represented for nearly a century have been disgraced by an exhibition worthy only of Bartholomew fair—wild beasts, monkeys, and horses, and asses, have polluted the fair fame of that once classic temple. But he had not yet done—the picture was not completed—for it had been visited by the additional indignity of becoming "THE SHILLING THEATRE!" All the riff-raff of London let loose to congregate in Drury Lane Theatre—but to no purpose; and all this was done and countenanced by the present mis-managing committee! It could not be pretended (as an honourable proprietor had just stated) that the drama could support Mr. Bunn, because the legitimate drama never stood so high (since the lamented death of the illustrious John Kemble and his unapproachable sister Mrs. Siddons) as at the present moment! Mr. Macready has sustained the character and raised the reputation of Covent Garden, so as to show a painful contrast to the one in which he was addressing them. Indeed, its reputation was raised so high under his superintendence, that the moment he relinquished it Madame Vestris became the lessee. Can the committee, after this, justify themselves for having continued it to be disgraced by wild beasts, and at length shut up in the very heart of the season; yet, in the face of this *frightful* picture, the proprietors are now asked to respond to the *precious document* which had been read to them, he could only say, even if he was alone, he should hold up his hand against the present mis-managing committee being re-elected. But that could not be accomplished, unless the "general committee" (who annually are required to elect a sub-committee) would aid the cause of the unfortunate, the de-

voted proprietors. With their assistance, some hope of future success might appear.

Lord Glengall then proposed that the six members of the general committee who go out by rotation should be ballotted for. This being done,—

John Ramsbottom, Esq., M. P., rose to state that he had been a member of the general committee for five years, and he found the sub-committee never called upon them except in cases (such as the present one) of great difficulty. Unless that system was altered, he must withdraw his name.

The general committee was then re-elected. Lord Hardwick, it was stated, had never attended; upon which Mr. Robins proposed Mr. Wells, a barrister, as a substitute; but as his lordship had written a letter, promising to be a better member, Mr. Ramsbottom withdrew his amendment.

The committee then retired to the saloon to elect a sub-committee. Now, it is not generally known to our readers that this had uniformly been a mere matter of form—they have always been re-elected by the "general committee." However, it soon became manifest A SCREW WAS LOOSE. Half an hour was occupied in an adjoining room, and a ballot taken, which Mr. Spencer and Mr. Arden lost their seats at the board of control, and Mr. Ramsbottom and Mr. (somebody else) took their places. This seemed to give some satisfaction, as one of the gentlemen had become exceedingly unpopular with the proprietors.

Lord Glengall esteemed and respected the names of the new committee; upon which Mr. Robins said, as they had weeded the committee a little, and promised to amend their ways in future, he should not oppose the vote of thanks to the chairman, although he should object to the confirmation of the Report.

A proprietor said he rose to defend Mr. Bunn from the unwarrantable attack that had just been made upon him. Mr. Bunn had got together the best company he could: he had engaged the most distinguished performers; and if brutes were afterwards introduced upon the stage, that was the fault of the public, who chose to encourage such exhibitions.

"Mr. Wells wished to know the state of the accounts.

Mr. George Robins said the debts were £17,706, to meet which there was £17,704, which latter amount consisted of £5,000 due from Captain Polhill, and £12,000 from Mr. Bunn.

Mr. Wells moved as an amendment, that the resolution, directing the pamphlet of Captain Spencer to be printed and circulated, be forthwith carried into effect.

After a long discussion, the motion was negatived by a majority of thirteen to six. The meeting then separated.

This is a nice document, replete with taste, liberality, and as much good English as ever Lindley Murray put together. The first bit of fun it contains is the announcement of Mr. Hammond having taken the theatre for three years—(if they had said for three months, it would have been nearer the mark)—and *THE ANTICIPATION of the greatest success from his KNOWN TALENT!* I believe Hammond to be as respectable and honourable a man as ever lived, and when I told him, last November, where he would be sure to go, (vol. I. page 234,) it was as far from my wishes, as it was near to my conviction, that go he must; but “the known talent” of Mr. Hammond not having escaped beyond the precincts of the Strand Theatre, renders this part of the story a burlesque. The pamphlet referred to is a compilation from the records of the establishment, by one of the most assiduous gentlemen and ripe scholars that ever formed part of a managing committee; and the persons instrumental in the exclusion of Captain Spencer, on this occasion, will regret it as long as the bricks of the theatre hold together. The compliment made to me by the noble chairman breathes all the courtesy, as the abuse of others betrays all the coarseness I had been accustomed to.

With reference to George Robins’s attack, the joke of the thing is, that all the while he was a member of the committee he was always foremost in proposing any assistance or accommodation to me; but when he turned his back upon the building, he paid the lessee the same compliment. His sallies against the horses and asses, and his contrasting their appearance with the classical performances of John Kemble and Mrs. Siddons, are diverting in the extreme, when it is recollected that they used all—horses, asses if you please, John Kemble, Charles Kemble, and Mrs. Siddons—to play *on the same evening*, some years ago at Covent Garden Theatre! Then Mr. Osbaldiston only had the latter theatre two years, instead of three, as stated, and, being sick of his losses, backed out; and as Mr. Macready did the same at the end of the same period, it is fair to presume he was not particularly in love with his gains. But, to use Robins’s own words, “the worst remains behind;” for the advertisement he took the trouble to draw up for the committee, three years ago, was shamefully disregarded, and, what is more, was not adopted. Such a tit bit as that ought not to be lost to the public, and though I have not been able to lay my hand upon the identical document, I have no doubt the subjoined is very near the valued original:

**THEATRE ROYAL DRURY LANE.**

**MR. GEORGE ROBINS** is honoured with the commands of the proprietors of this far-famed

**MINE OF WEALTH,**

to submit to public competition the lease of it for as many years as may be agreeable, which a man of any taste may think himself truly fortunate in possessing.

**THE SCENERY,**

consisting of some hundred pieces, described in the glowing language of the stage, under the head of flats, wings, side-pieces, borders, sinks, flies, &c. &c., has been painted, if it be not rubbed out, by

**STANFIELD AND GRIEVE,**

whose unsurpassed genius has long since obtained for them the enviable title of the

**CLAUDES AND WILSONS OF THE DRAMA.**

At the summit of one side of the building will be found

**THE WARDROBE,**

which consists, according to the Master Tailor's latest report, of

**THIRTY-THREE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY DRESSES,** from a king's jerkin to a peasant's jacket; while, on the other side of the house, for the strict preservation of moral rectitude, will be found

**A BEAUTIFUL STOCK OF LADIES' ATTIRE,** from Queen Catherine's robe to Mrs. Bulgruddery's best flannel petticoat.

**THE PROPERTIES**

are a valuable property indeed, as can be attested by the evidence of Mr. Philip Stone, so many years the eminent superintendent thereof. There are

**SIX-AND-THIRTY PRIVATE BOXES,**

if you can but get a tenant for them; though it must not be concealed that

**HER GRACIOUS MAJESTY**

is the only patroness who ever thinks of taking one. To be sure

**THE DUKE OF BEDFORD**

has the best in the house, being able, as ground-landlord, to pick and choose for himself, without paying a penny for it. Then

**MISS BURDETT COUTTS**

is owner of one for life, in which no lessee can have any interest. Then there are

**THREE HUNDRED RENTERS' SHARES,**

entitling the owner of each to a free admission; and as those who don't use them sell them, the theatre is subject to so many (and a pretty many more) nightly admissions.

**THE SALOON,**

in which so much nonsense is annually delivered by the proprietors, is a spacious room capable of holding

**TWO HUNDRED LADIES,**

and lined with sufficient plate-glass to monopolize all the reflections that can possibly be made in it.

**THE TREASURY,**

upon the real Shaksperian principle of "safe bind, safe find," is fitted up with a spacious iron chest, desk, and counter, and wants nothing but a quantity of treasure to make it complete. "A reform of the stage," which all will admit has been long desirable, has been at length accomplished, for

**A NEW STAGE**

altogether, has very recently been laid down and perfected. To crown all, Mr. Robins is happy in making it known that

**A PELLUCID SPRING.**

which has long given the title to Drury Lane, (and likewise to a friend of his resident in the neighbourhood, who shall be nameless,) of

**THE PUMP OF THE PARISH,**

supplies the building with the purest water, and was for years used by

**THE IMMORTAL SHERIDAN,**

Kean, and other "choice spirits," to mix with their brandy and other choice spirits.

**ITS REDOLENT LOCALITY**

requires no observation, from its vicinity to Covent-Garden Market; and its fashionable situation may be best judged when Mr. Robins states that it is within a mile of

**BUCKINGHAM PALACE.**

\* \* Farther particulars may be obtained at the different libraries and hotels in Dunstable, Penzance, Tadcastor, Sutton Coldfield, Moreton in the Marsh, Crawley, Deptford, Gravesend, Droitwich, Ilford, Middle Wallop, John o'Groats, Salisbury Plain, and other well-known theatrical places; at the celebrated establishments on Epsom Downs, Ascot, Newmarket, and Doncaster, where "the play, the play's the thing," and of



Mr. George Robins, at his Great Rooms, Piazza, Covent-Garden.

The proprietor, who "rose to defend Mr. Bunn from the unwarrantable attack made upon him," was my much esteemed friend Mr. Wallace, a gentleman whose literary and social qualifications, whose excellent heart and general liberality have made him as respected, beloved, and popular, since his return from India, as he was during his long residence there.

The reference in the foregoing report to the deficiency in the rent, made by Mr. Robins, led to the following correspondence in the *Times* newspaper, inserted here upon the principle, thus far acted upon, of giving all official documents, whether for me or against me.

No. 1.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

SIR,

Having read your report of the meeting of the Drury Lane Theatre proprietors, in which I am stated (in reply to a question from the garrulous ex-committee man, Mr. G. Robins,) to be indebted to that body in the sum of £12,211 for rent, I solicit a small space in your valuable journal to say that such statement is a falsehood.

The theatre having been for the last three seasons let to me under such singular circumstances, and at such a period of the year as almost to preclude the possibility of forming a company and making the necessary arrangements to bring them into action, I only consented to execute a lease on the express understanding that every indulgence was to be extended to me in the exaction of rent (considering myself rather as an agent than a tenant) an understanding honourably acted up to by the sub-committee. No man in his senses would have taken the theatre on any other conditions.

At the same time, I beg to say with reference to the difference in amount between the rent stipulated in my lease and what I actually did pay, that I transferred to the committee all the property I had introduced into their theatre, at a cost to myself of several thousand pounds.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient and obliged servant,

A. BUNN.

No 2.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

SIR,

My attention has been called to a letter of Mr. Alfred

Bunn's, written I apprehend while he was smarting under the severe lash created by his long continued Bartholomew\* fair ex-

\* Contrasted with this mild rebuke may be submitted as good a bit of fun as can well be conceived, whereby it would seem that to carry their own purposes men sometimes eat their own words:

*Copy of an announcement recently made by Mr. George Robins for the sale of two renters' shares in the patent theatres.*

Particulars and Conditions of Sale of two renters' shares in the Theatres Royal Covent Garden and Drury Lane, held for about fifty-five years, with annual free admissions, one to each share, which will be sold by auction by Mr. George Robins, at the Auction Mart, London, on Tuesday 14th April, 1840, at 12 o'clock, in two lots, by direction of the executor of Wm. Fraser Esq., deceased. Madame Vestris is the lessee of Covent Garden Theatre, which places beyond the possibility of doubt the fact that unapproachable tact and good taste have prevailed in every department; and it is not too much to conclude that triumphant success will reward a system of management which she has constituted her own, and one not to be in dread of rivalry.

LOT I.—An annuity or rent charge, secured upon the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, denominated a renter's share, which originally cost five hundred pounds. The income has been reduced from 25*l.* a-year to 12*l.* 10*s.* a-year by the mutual consent of the shareholders; and this sum is paid with the punctuality of the Bank dividends by the respectable treasurer of Covent Garden Theatre. The holder of the share is likewise entitled to free admission to any part of the theatre before the curtain, which may be disposed of annually, and should produce at least 5*l.* Upon this calculation the income may be estimated at 17*l.* 10*s.* a-year. Indeed, under such auspicious management the free admissions will be greatly increased in their annual value. The admission and income for the present season are both included.

LOT II.—An annuity of 25*l.* a-year, secured upon the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, reduced by consent and upon the reliance of an act of parliament to 12*l.* 10*s.* a-year. It is a first charge after payment of rent and taxes, and is secured upon this splendid theatre and its appendages. The dividends upon these shares, so long as a healthy management prevailed, were paid with the regularity of the Bank dividends; and it must not be disguised that any expectation of improvement will necessarily have reference to the hope that a committee will soon preside, who will adopt a better course of management. It may be well to add, that the difficulty of securing this annuity by levying a distress no longer exists. It needs only wise heads to let, and a clever man to take, the theatre, at a reasonable rate, to ensure a respectable dividend. Particulars may be had at the offices in Covent Garden.

*Extract from the Morning Post of the 28th November, 1835, relative to the very same subject.*

COVENT GARDEN THEATRE.—A rent-charge annuity of 25*l.* a-year payable half-yearly, without abatement, secured upon Covent Garden theatre, with a transferable free admission, held for sixty years. This lot Mr. Robins said, had been sold, without his knowledge up to that hour, by private contract.

DRURY LANE THEATRE.—Next were submitted twenty shares, of 100*l.*

hibition on the boards of Drury Lane. I pass by the falsehood and the vulgarity of his notable production, and content myself by observing, that the debt due to Drury Lane Theatre was stated by Lord Glengall and the secretary, at the public meeting, to be £12,211; and as I prefer their statement, I shall continue to believe he is a debtor to that amount, and I will add I think it very probable he will never owe less.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your very obedient servant,

Covent Garden, July 27, 1839.

GEORGE ROBINS.

No. 3.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

SIR,

Permit me to say, in reply to a letter in your paper of this day, signed "George Robins," that I desire no other testimony to the truth of my communication of Friday last, than that of the Lord Glengall and the secretary of the Drury Lane proprietors. Having in the course of a long connexion with the London stage, brought before the public almost every performer of eminence my own or any other country could boast of, and having by their co-operation produced some of the most successful novelties known to that stage, I may smile at the vituperation levelled at me, as I do at the idle charge of falsehood and vulgarity, emanating from that exquisite sample of both, Mr. George Robins.

I have the honour to be, sir,

Your obliged and obedient servant,

Brompton, July 29, 1839.

A. BUNN.

I was told that Robins issued a rejoinder in some other paper but I never read a syllable of it; and if I had, I never should have replied to it. I really believe Robins is a good-hearted man at the bottom; and if his fulminations against me either amused him or answered his purpose, I have not the slightest angry feeling for his having issued them.

each, in the joint stock company of the Theatre Royal Drury Lane. Mr. Robins stated that the shares he had to submit were very different from those of Covent Garden, where they promised to pay; but at Drury Lane Theatre they were bound to pay 1*d.* and 3*d.* each night of performance; and it was likely, from the astonishing success of Mr. Bunn with the present pieces, the house would be open the whole year, and that it would be unnecessary to prepare either Christmas or Easter new entertainments. The money taken nightly was without precedent.

The subject of these letters, viz. the actual arrear of rent, is easily disposed of. The committee proved under my estate, as their lease legally enabled them to do, for the said £12,211.; but an equitable understanding, as will be perceived by their own official document presently to be submitted, was entered into, that an allowance was to be made for all the property introduced by me into the theatre; and from the mass of it, that allowance would have amounted to something considerable, had no arrear of rent existed. But such is the distinction between law and equity, that they were fully entitled to claim for the whole amount, being at the same time in possession of the said property as a proportionable security. That the reader, however, may judge of the position in which I stood for so many years with the sub-committee, general committee, and proprietors, I beg to subjoin the allusions to myself in each of the annual reports drawn up by the first, sanctioned by the second, and confirmed and passed by the latter body, during my connexion with them.

*Extract from the Report on the Season, 1832-33, made 23rd July, 1833.*

The committee have relet the theatre for a term of six years, at a rent of £8,000 for the past three years, and £8,500 for the last three years, but determinable at the end of the third year at the option of the lessee; and from the talent, industry, and experience of Mr. Bunn, the committee are sanguine in their expectations that that gentleman possesses the qualifications to render it successful. And the committee beg to add, that they have taken the most undeniable security for the payment of the rent and performance of covenants.

*Extract from the Report on the season 1833-34, made the 19th July, 1834.*

The committee have the satisfaction to report that the lease was executed agreeably to their former report on the stipulated rent of £8,000 which has been regularly paid by the lessee into the hands of the trustees for the proprietors.

The experiment of uniting the two theatres under one management, (however hazardous the undertaking,) the committee have reason to believe has not only given satisfaction to the public, but afforded to the various persons dependent on these extensive concerns a security of receiving their salaries for the full complement of two hundred nights.

*Extract from the Report on the Season 1834-35, made the 4th August, 1835.*

Considerable difficulties have from time to time arisen during the progress, which claimed the best exertions of the committee

to meet. It is a well-grounded belief that theatrical property at this time labours under a depression hitherto unknown; yet by the extraordinary exertions and tact of the lessee, the season was brought to a close comparatively successful.

*Extract from the Report on the Season 1835-36, made the 4th August, 1836.*

The lease of the theatre having expired on the 5th of July last, the committee were called upon to exercise their judgment in fixing upon a future tenant of the property; and having submitted it to competition in the usual way by public advertisement, and no opportunity presenting itself for otherwise disposing of it with advantage, from any tenders they received, they are again about to confide the property for three years to the lesseeship of Mr. Bunn, whose zealous and judicious management of the enterprise of the stage, during the past season, has evinced so much tact and knowledge in conducting an establishment of such magnitude and public interest.

*Extract from the Report of the Season, 1836-37, made the 17th August, 1837.*

The committee cannot omit the opportunity of bearing testimony to the zeal, industry, and talent of Mr. Bunn, under every trial and disappointment, and his anxious wish at all times to keep faith with the committee, who may fairly say, that if success has not attended his exertions, all things considered in the preceding year, that they have no reason to complain, nor even under such unfavourable circumstances to withdraw their confidence from their lessee, who, it must not be forgotten, amongst all his other outlay, embellished and beautified the interior of the theatre, during the last vacation, at a cost of £1,500.

*Extract from the Report on the Season 1837-38, made 8th August, 1838.*

(A copy of which was officially sent me by the sub-committee; and a reference to the memorandum at the bottom of it corroborates the statement previously adduced, of the allowance that was to be made for my addition to the company's stock.)

*General Committee. Resolution, 8th Aug. 1838.*

The theatre being now not only without a lessee, but without any prospect of one, and the sub-committee feeling the importance of not allowing the theatre to remain closed, came to the resolution of entering into some provisional arrangement with Mr. Bunn, subject to the sanction of the general committee; and Mr. Bunn having been called in, and having had the conditions on which the theatre had been submitted to public

competition laid before him, (to the terms of which he signified his assent,) he agreed to continue his exertions as lessee of this property, under the usual lease of the theatre, hoping, at the same time, that the committee would extend towards him their favourable consideration on the arduous undertaking, in which he was about to engage.

The lease was executed on the 9th of October, and left in possession of the sub-committee.

*Mem.* At the end of the report 28th July, 1838: viz., Mr. Bunn also is entitled to an allowance for the increased amount of properties, scenery, and wardrobe, placed by him in the theatre, but not accurately estimated.

*Extract from the report on the season 1838-39* has already been given in the foregoing detail of the annual meeting in July last.

No surreptitious means having been adopted, nor indeed necessary to obtain these extracts, they having been publicly read, and as publicly given in most of the newspapers, I may be pardoned, I hope, whatever vanity may attach itself to the dissemination of this compendium of them all, from the necessity, as it seems to me, of showing that the scurrility I was on this last occasion subject to was at all events a novelty. I have now recorded the opinion of the general body of the Drury Lane proprietary, and having by letter thanked the noble chairman for the handsome manner in which he was pleased to speak of me, up to the latest moment, my feelings were exceedingly gratified by the receipt of the following letter from that noble lord, which finally wound up my connexion with THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

“ August 15, 1839.

MY DEAR SIR,

I assure you that I conceive I did you but an act of justice in making those observations which I felt myself called upon to express, at our meeting, for indeed no one could have acted more honourably than you did, throughout your arduous management of Drury Lane Theatre; and I only regret that you are not engaged at present in assisting in carrying on the business of the establishment.

I hope sincerely that I may have it in my power to assist you in any of your future plans, and earnestly desire that they may be successful.

Believe me, very sincerely yours,

To A. Bunn, Esq.

GLENGALL.

The Saturday preceding the Drury Lane meeting, a dinner was given to my late rival, to do justice, as the advertisements expressly stated, to “ the zeal, taste, and liberality,” with which

he had managed Covent Garden Theatre for the two preceding years. His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex was coaxed into the chair, and, with his acknowledged good-nature, fulfilled the duties of it with his acknowledged tact: but as his royal highness (with deep regret be it stated) had been prevented by illness from entering Covent Garden Theatre during the whole term of Mr. Macready's tenure, it will be amusing to see to what an extent his Royal Highness was impressed with a notion of those exertions which, had he seen them, he must have reported far differently. His Royal Highness's speech is a bijou in its way, and as such I am most anxious to preserve it.

"The chairman said, he now rose for the purpose of performing a most pleasing duty, that of expressing in the name of the meeting their high opinion of the merits of Mr. Macready, and the obligation which they themselves, and the public, were under to that gentleman for his strenuous exertions in support of the legitimate drama. He felt great delicacy upon that occasion, inasmuch as he saw himself surrounded by men of the most eminent talents in this country, and who had most efficiently exerted themselves for the advantage of the stage. This was a circumstance which would have prompted him to say little, but when he perceived such a numerous attendance on that occasion, and when he recollected the good materials he had to work upon, (*a laugh*)—he thought he should be enabled to say a few words more than he should otherwise have felt disposed to indulge in. In viewing many gentlemen then present who took their rank either as poets or in some other branch of the literature of the country, he would not give way to any flights of fancy, but would speak merely to facts, and leave to others the region of imagination. With respect to his (Mr. Macready's) services to the drama, he thought they had a right to look at them in a twofold shape—first, the prominent figure he had always maintained in his profession, and last, not least, his conduct as manager of Covent Garden Theatre. In the first capacity, his reputation was well known throughout this country and in America also, where he at one time resided, and when to this he added not only the talent of the individual but the character of a gentleman\* and of the honest man, he thought he conveyed the greatest compliment which it was in his power to bestow. The stage was an arduous task to undertake: the individual who entered upon that career, and who had worked his way up in the profession, well knew

\* Did his Royal Highness ever happen to be assailed and half murdered in a dark room, by a "gentleman," almost before he knew who was his assailant?

the difficulties he had to fight with, and the temptations to which he was exposed, the variety of calls upon him, either from affection, or friendship, or fellow-feeling; and he also knew the thousand anxieties—and vicissitudes to which he was exposed in the performance of an irksome duty. When, therefore, having encountered and surmounted all these difficulties, they had arrived at the top of their profession, surely they deserved credit for their talent, and respect for the character which had carried them through all these trials. If that individual were a man of sense and reflection, such a career would teach him to give similar credit to other less successful, to excuse their follies, to assist their wants, and to give them the benefit of that compassion which existed in the breast of every honest man, and which he was satisfied held firm dominion in the breast of the gentleman whom he alluded to.

“After this preface, he need not add that such a school as the one he had adverted to was the very one which pointed out such an individual as the proper selection to be made for the management of a theatre. An individual impressed with such feelings, would go to work in a very different way from vulgar minds. He would look upon his name as the last good thing to be considered. It was his duty to cater for the public; and to produce before them only such individuals as were deserving of public attention. He had to bring before the public persons fitted to appear upon the stage, and pieces suitable to the taste, the feelings, and the morals of the country; and he had to take care that the interests of those individuals whom he so engaged were properly secured and guarded. Having laid down that as a principle, let them look at Mr. Macready’s exertions since he had presided for the last two years as manager of Covent Garden Theatre. He had succeeded in reviving\* no less than ten of Shakspeare’s plays; indeed, he had not only revised them, but he had placed them upon a proper footing, and had caused them to be represented in a style worthy of the illustrious author of those works, thus inspiring an interest and giving an encouragement to the drama which every lover of this country would wish to see extended. With the assistance of distinguished individuals then present, he had brought out two new plays which had ensured universal applause. Need he name Sir E. L. Bulwer or Mr. Sheridan Knowles? Besides these, there were various others which he had revived—some of Lord Byron’s, of Ser-

\* This is a somewhat curious term to apply to plays it is customary to play, and which have been played every season, and far better “got up” and acted, than under Mr. Macready’s management—as hath been shown.



geant 'Talfourd's, and some of Beaumont and Fletcher's. It was a great exertion on the part of Mr. Macready to have provided such theatrical representations as merited the support of an enlightened and generous public. In doing this, he had not sought his own advantage, for, on the contrary, he had made great personal sacrifices of his own income, in addition to having undergone great and heavy labour in conducting the theatre for two years—and why? because he was under the impression that it was possible to do good to the theatre, and even while paying others regularly, to raise the character of the national drama. He rejoiced that bankruptcy had not followed the experiment, which, on the contrary, had been most successful. Mr. Macready paid a rental for the first year of £5,675 for the theatre, and for the last year he had paid a rent of £7,000, which rentals were actually paid out of the produce of the theatre in addition to £3,000 for repairs. Thus in the course of two years, under the management of Mr. Macready, nearly fifteen thousand pounds had been paid for rent and necessities for the theatre.\* Such an individual had a strong claim to the notice and attention of the company. Having stated his claims on the ground of economy, he would now proceed to a more interesting part of his management—namely, the moral effects it had produced. Mr. Macready had created such a sense of propriety in the theatre, that good fathers and mothers might now attend with their children, and not witness the scenes of confusion, idleness, and obscenity which formerly prevailed. He might go farther, and ask what formerly was the state of confusion in the saloon? It was now, however, of a different character, and an honest woman and her husband might walk quietly through it. It was now conducted in a wholesome and proper manner, and was no longer calculated to shock the feelings of the public. They were, therefore, indebted to Mr. Macready, not only for his success in reviving the national drama, but for having provided a wholesome and pleasant amusement for honest people, where they were more likely to meet with sound ideas of morality than if they had remained at home. He now came to a subject of much more delicacy. Matters of property should of course be decided by law, and he had no wish to excite an unpleasant feeling against any one. Yet he could not but regret that patent rights should exist as property. He had been always led to think they existed but for a certain number of years; but they were so far looked upon as perpetual property, that mo-

\* The two years I managed Covent Garden Theatre, the sum of £17,370 was paid to the proprietors for rent, besides nearly £2,000 for taxes, and a large outlay on the building itself; but that's not worth mentioning, because I was not "Shakspeare's representative!"

ney had frequently been raised upon them. Under these circumstances, he would only say that the sooner a compromise was effected so as to get rid of them altogether, the better it would be for the public.\* He saw his honourable friend (Mr. Sheil) near him, who had a greater facility than he possessed of addressing a public company; but in good-will to serve the cause no one could be more sincere than himself. He was delighted at having this opportunity of expressing his opinions and good feelings towards the theatre, his obligations to Mr. Macready for his services in reviving the legitimate drama, and his extreme pleasure at seeing so numerous a meeting. He was also glad to learn that the demonstration was not to be confined to a dinner, for he had heard that it was the intention of Mr. Macready's friends to present him with a more solid token of their approbation—a proposal he should follow with great pleasure. He begged to apologize for the length of time he had detained the meeting, and to add his acknowledgments of Mr. Macready's deserts for his exertions for the last two years; and whatever might be his (Mr. Macready's) future pursuits, he would carry with him the good wishes and kind feelings not only of that society, but of all friends to the prosperity of the *drama*."

To enable me to swallow such a dose as this, I went to sea—a-sailing—a-sailing—not in the capacity of those who have been "bound 'prentice to a waterman," but in my worthy friend Allen's fine yacht, *The Osprey*. A party of us dashed over "the herring pond," and under the heights of Calais. I dashed off a humble tribute, mediocre enough, no doubt, to our gallant little vessel:

The Osprey! the Osprey!  
 Oh, give us but a gale,  
 And none shall ride  
 Across the tide  
 With half as little sail!  
 We leave the world behind us—  
 Its cares to hearts that weep:  
 The surge of the sea  
 And the melody  
 Of the winds which o'er it sweep,  
 Are the magic ties that bind us  
 To THE FREEDOM OF THE DEEP!  
 The Osprey! the Osprey!  
 Oh, 'tis a joy to mark  
 On ocean's brim  
 The gallant trim  
 Of that sea-worthy bark!

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\* His Royal Highness is respectfully referred to the long account given in these volumes of the said patents, by which he will find they are worse than got rid of.

The storm may gather round us,  
 Our vigils still we keep—  
 The foam and the flash  
 Of the waves that dash  
 O'er her deck, with angry leap,  
 Are the ties that long have bound us  
 To THE FREEDOM OF THE DEEP !

But as the object which had long been uppermost in my mind stood very little chance of being disposed of poetically, I at once directed my serious attention to the composition of it in its present form.

It is unnecessary to tell those who have been obliging enough to peruse this work, that it aims at no literary distinction, and is entitled to none. The rapidity with which it has been "put together" will convince the reader of all I wish him to be convinced, that these pages present a cursory interpretation of my own loose thoughts, at random strung, after the same fashion, and in precisely the same unpolished language, in which I *do* deliver, and *have* delivered, the same observations by word of mouth; in fact, an indulgence in the *currente calamo*, perhaps, of a sanguine, but I hope a reflective turn of mind. There can be very little intellectual superiority to be made manifest by the authorship of such matter as this, dependent as it is for its character principally upon the correctness of its statements, and the validity of its arguments. As I have neither aimed at, nor exhibited, a display of any vast mental acquirements, my ambition will be satisfied without the bestowal of praise, and my complacency will not be disturbed by that of disparagement. My labour has had no higher aim than

"The colouring of the scenes which fleet along,  
 Which I would seize, in passing, to beguile  
 My breast, or that of others, for a while.  
 Fame is the thirst of youth—but I am not  
 So young as to regard men's frown or smile,  
 As loss or guerdon of a glorious lot."

I do not deny that I have striven throughout, with reference to those who have so wilfully or unintentionally misrepresented me, "to work mine end upon their senses;" but my staff being broken, I shall be perfectly content, without one feeling of disappointment, or one expression of annoyance, should it be the desire of my reader, and the general pleasure of all-potent public opinion, to act upon the conclusion which dissolved the spell of *Prospero*,

"And deeper than did ever plummet sound  
 I'll drown MY BOOK."

THE END.







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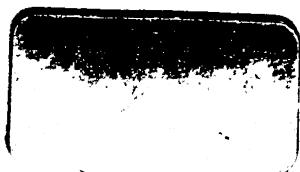


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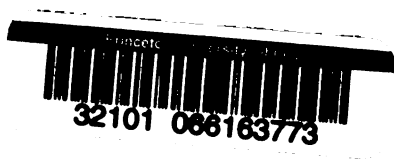
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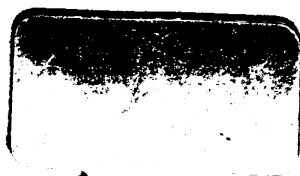




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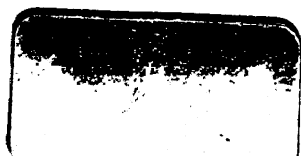


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